

A ROUSING STORY OF ALL-AROUND ATHLETICS!

GOOD STORIES FRANK MANLEY'S WEEKLY. OF YOUNG ATHLETES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1905 by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York.

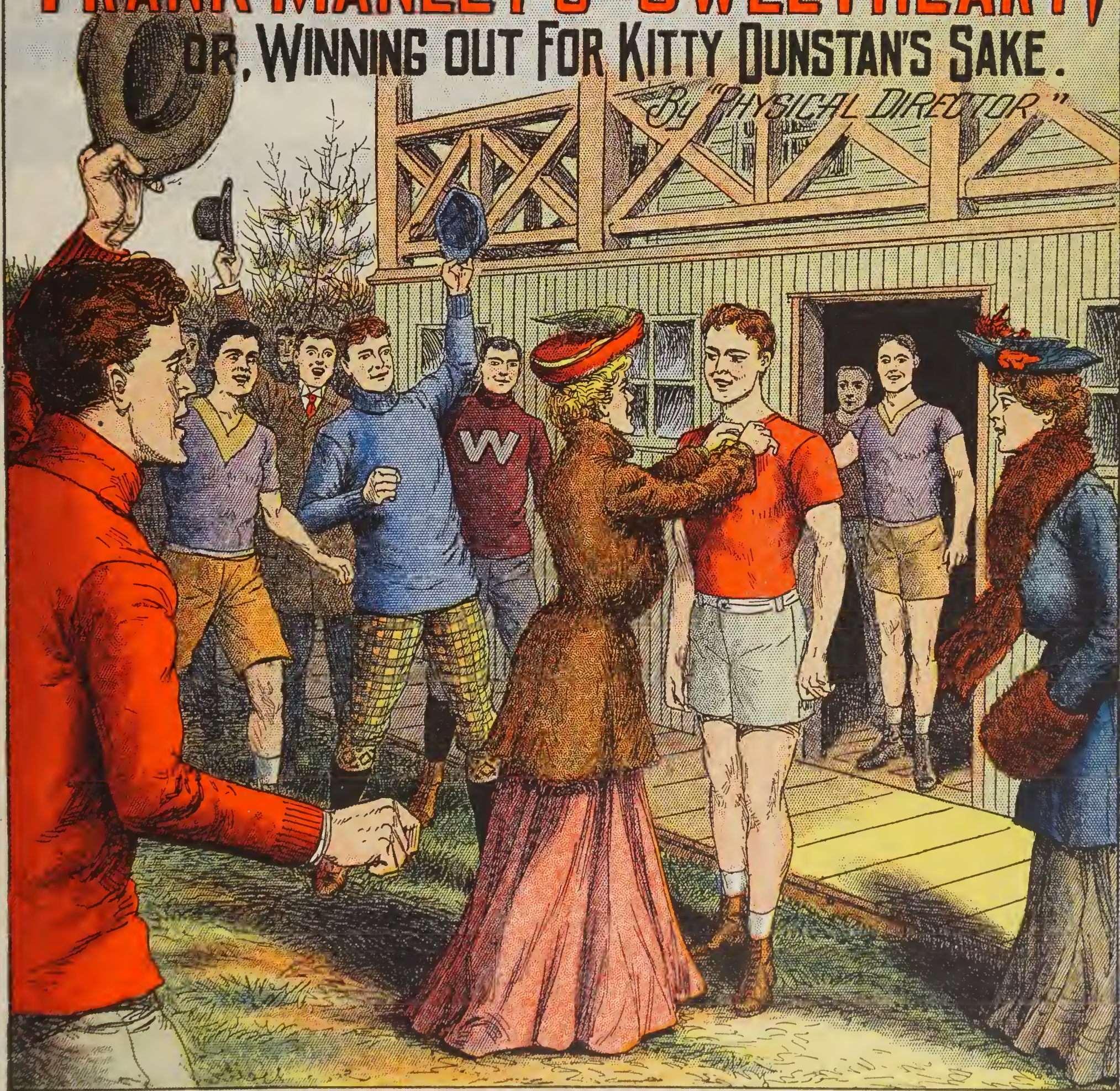
No. 14.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 8, 1905.

Price 5 Cents.

FRANK MANLEY'S SWEETHEART; OR, WINNING OUT FOR KITTY DUNSTAN'S SAKE.

By "PHYSICAL DIRECTOR"



Racket reigned as Kitty Dunstan pinned the medal to Frank's breast. "I won it for your sake, you know," he found chance to whisper. Her soft-spoken answer made his pulses bound again.

Frank Manley's Weekly

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FRANK MANLEY'S SWEETHEART;

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CHAPTER I.

JUST PLAIN TRAMPS.

"Getting used up, Wallie?"

"Not a bit."

"I didn't really think you would."

"Pshaw! I'm never going to be tired again—not after that run Saturday."

"It was a splendid run, and you did it splendidly."

"But I had to finish in the second squad!" muttered Wallie Egbert, disgustedly.

"So did a lot of bigger fellows than you," laughed Manley.

"But if only I could have kept with the first squad right through!" cried the little fellow, wistfully.

"Courage, Wallie. It won't be more than a few weeks before you can run ten miles with any squad."

"Do you really think so?"

"Think? Why, I'm sure of it. And, remember that, last summer, you couldn't run a hundred yards without all but fainting."

"Oh, don't remind me of those silly days!" begged the little fellow.

"If I'm reminding you, it is only to call your attention

to the big difference in you between now and last summer," called back Frank Manley.

"Do you think I need to be reminded of the change? Don't I feel it? The change in me stands for all the difference between a make-believe boy and a real one!"

After the hard football season, followed by a week of wonderful running, Captain Frank Manley had ordered a week of relaxation for the members of the famous Woodstock Junior Athletic Club.

During the current week all that was to be expected of members was that they should report at the club's handsome new gymnasium once a day for a bout of exercise.

Outside of that, for this week, the fellows were at liberty to do as they pleased with their time out of school.

An occasional period of rest is as good for an athlete as it is for any one else.

An athlete's period of rest, however, should not be wholly free from exercise.

Even during his "vacation" he should take some exercise every day; beyond that of keeping the joints limber and the muscles somewhat employed, he may take things more easily than when in the full swing of training.

But Manley and a few others had found it impossible to do simply nothing after school in the afternoon.

So Manley and these few choice spirits had decided on

a brisk ten-mile walk between school's closing and supper time.

To most of these youngsters such a walk was as nothing.

On this walk Manley and his chum and lieutenant, Hal Spofford, headed the little squad.

Fifty feet or so to the rear tramped Jack Winston—"Jackets"—and Wallie Egbert.

Jackets was the youngest member of the club, but one of its best athletes.

He had been brought into the club almost a year before by Frank Manley.

Winston had been constantly under Manley's training, and now the results of that work showed in one of the strongest, healthiest fourteen-year-old boys that one could find anywhere.

Yet, at the outset, Jackets had been a typical weakling, with a strong tendency to consumption.

Wallie Egbert was not a member of the club.

He had been placed under Manley's physical direction back in the summer, at the height of the baseball season, when the club lived under canvas.

Wallie's father had paid the club a rather handsome sum for the privilege of having his son taken in hand.

So well pleased had Mr. Egbert been with the results that he had arranged to have Wallie remain in Woodstock through the winter and keep up his training work with the club.

That had netted the club another handsome addition to the treasury.

Wallie was, as yet, nothing of the athlete that Jackets was, but he bade fair to become such in time.

Back of these two interesting youngsters strolled big, powerful, quick-tempered but generous Joe Prescott, and at his side was Inow Sato, the Japanese member of the club and a student at Dr. Holbrook's academy.

Bringing up the rear of this long-drawn-out walking squad were Bob Everett and Al Adams.

Adams was the secretary of the club. Everett was nicknamed "Old Reliable," from the fact that, while neither brilliant nor fast in athletics, yet he was one of those steady fellows with good judgment, who, in a football eleven or baseball nine, can generally be relied upon to pull the team out of a bad hole at a critical point in the game.

With all of these young men, except Wallie Egbert, this ten-mile walk was as nothing, except, as Hal put it, as a means of "keeping the muscles from going to sleep."

Wallie had gone in for physical training so thoroughly that he was always asking questions—always seeking new "pointers."

So now he left Jackets and slipped up to Manley's side.

"Frank, just what is the benefit of walking?"

"Don't you feel it?" smiled Frank.

"Oh, yes, of course. And every one knows that walking is good. But what I mean is, just how does walking do any one good?"

"Well," replied Frank, thoughtfully, "walking is about the best exercise of all for bringing the flesh down to a good, hard condition. I don't mean a little walk of a mile

and a half, of course. Such a short walk is fit only for invalids who are trying to get strong. But a good ten-mile walk hardens the flesh and brings one down to fit condition. You won't find any over-fat men who are in the habit of taking long walks."

"Isn't a five-mile walk good, then?"

"Oh, yes; very good for one who just wants to keep in good, ordinary condition. Nothing less than a five-mile walk counts. No one has any right to call himself healthy if he can't step right out for five miles without tiring himself.

"But the ten-mile walk should be the lowest standard for a boy who wants to think himself an athlete. Find a boy who can't walk ten miles without going lame and stiff, and I'll show you a boy who isn't an athlete, but who is still a long way from being one."

"How does walking help the muscles?"

"By using them. Nearly all of the muscles except those of the arms are exercised in a long walk. If you doubt that, stop to think how sore you were 'all over' after the first long walk you took."

"And how does walking help the general health?"

"Why, it also uses all of the muscles that control the action of the organs. Therefore, for general organic health, no one exercise—except running—does as much good. And it must be remembered that many a fellow who can't run a full mile can walk twenty. So, for some fellows, long walks will somewhat take the place of running."

That satisfied Wallie, who had a strong instinct, any way, against being a "bore." So he fell back and resumed his walk with Jackets.

"Too bad we couldn't have organized a week of walking with the girls' club," remarked Hal, whose thoughts happened to be on Grace Scott, Kitty Dunstan's friend.

"You mean for our club to walk with the girls' club?" queried Manley.

"Yes; of course."

"It wouldn't do."

"Why not?"

"Why, it is all right enough for the girls' club to come to our gymnasium once in a while, or to meet us at a dance. But for the girls to be seen out with us steadily would be sure to make unpleasant talk. Hal, old fellow, we've got such an uncommonly nice lot of girls here in Woodstock that we youngsters have got to help them keep their reputation for being nice."

"That's right," nodded his chum. "I hadn't looked at it in just that way before I spoke."

The Woodstock boys were proud and careful of their girl friends. They met the members of the girls' club at a dance at the gym once a week, but always with chaperons present. The girls generally attended contests in which the club took part, but the girls always went with their relatives and home friends. In all ways, Manley and his fellows strove to keep public respect for the girls at the highest notch.

The walkers, having passed the furthest point from

Woodstock on their stroll, were now headed homeward toward the close of the day.

Now, as they plodded along over the country road, crunching the frozen dirt under their strong shoes, the rattle of wheels just around the bend beyond caused them to go obliquely to the roadside.

A handsome bay horse came in sight, drawing a buggy that contained two men.

The horse was a spirited animal; the harness, vehicle and robes were of fine quality.

Of the two men in the buggy, one was short and thick-set and rather flashily dressed. He suggested the "horsey" man.

The other was taller, slenderer, more tastefully dressed; a sharp-eyed man, apparently about forty-five years old, yet iron-gray had already begun to tinge his dark hair.

The nose of this taller was large and sharp, making one think of the eagle's beak. It was distinctively a "fighting nose," though the keen eyes and quiet manner suggested the man who would not let his temper get the best of him unnecessarily.

"That's the third time I've seen those chaps in two days," spoke Manley, when the buggy had gone on by them.

"Know who they are?" asked Hal.

"No; but I'd like to. They're stopping at Barberville, at the hotel."

"If you know that much, you must know their names."

"No; I know only the names that they gave."

That remark made Hal stare curiously at his chum.

"The names that men give are not always the names to which they're entitled," observed Manley, with a smile.

"Then you think they're crooks of one kind or another?" demanded Hal, quickly.

"They may not be. But each time I've seen them before this they've been studying, from their buggy, one vacant country house or another. Now, as you know, Hal, out on these country roads there are many summer homes of wealthy people, and these summer homes are now closed."

"Is it possible that these fellows are studying the ground for burglaries?"

"It may be," said Frank, slowly. "And yet I hardly think it. That short, flashy chap, who calls himself Briggs, might be a burglar, or anything else cheap. But the tall man, who registered as Southey, doesn't look like a common man at anything—not even at crime. Yet they seemed annoyed both times when I came upon them, and so I can't get it out of my head that they're up to something wrong. I'm really curious, old fellow, to know more about them."

"I fancied that that tall man—Southey, you call him—looked at you rather sharply as they went by just now."

"Perhaps he thinks that meeting me so often may be proof of too much curiosity on my part."

"He's all the more sure of it," laughed Manley, "if he happens to know that I had the pair looked up at the hotel in Barberville."

"I've been hoping for a few days of quiet, without any train of excitement," sighed Hal.

"Oh, you'll have quiet enough, I guess, as far as those two strangers are concerned," laughed Frank. "We're not likely to run counter to them."

It was a prediction, however, that was not likely to be fulfilled.

CHAPTER II.

KITTY LAUGHS AND IS NOT AFRAID.

There were others around Woodstock who believed in walking for exercise.

One of these was Miss Kitty Dunstan, president of the Girls' Club of Woodstock.

She had originally organized the club as a walking club, and it still retained the characteristic that its members were fond of walking.

Yet of all the members, none was more devoted to walking than this pretty little president, who never needed to leave home except in a carriage from her father's stable.

As Kitty stood on the porch on this keen, bright December afternoon, fastening her gloves, her father, in shooting togs, and carrying a gun, came up from the woods at the rear.

"Whereaway, Kit?" hailed her father.

"Off for a walk to town and back, papa, unless you have something you would rather have me do."

"Only one thing I might prefer to have you do," rejoined her father.

"What is that, sir?"

"Don't you think it would be better if you gave the horses exercise once in a while?"

Kitty pouted slightly. Then a delicious smile parted her lips.

"I'm afraid I'm selfish, papa. I want the exercise myself. So, unless you really mind, I'll walk, as I had first planned. Won't you come along?"

"Can't," replied her father. "Even a rich man has to work once in a while. I have accounts to go over, some checks to write, and letters, and——"

He paused, feeling, probably, that he had given sufficient proof that his time was to be occupied.

But he could not help adding:

"Really, Catherine, I am a little troubled by your being so much on the road."

"Then I'll ride, since you wish it," but disappointment showed plainly in the girl's eyes.

"Oh, you needn't, to please me," her father made haste to say. "I suppose I am an old fuss to think about your meeting troublesome characters on the road."

"No such luck!" cried the girl, mischievously.

"Eh?" demanded her father, sharply.

"Frank Manley and Hal have taught me so many ways of taking care of myself that I almost wish some one would venture to stop me on the road," she went on.

"Catherine!" cried her father, in alarm.

"There!" she breathed, penitently. "I've gone and scared the best father in the world. Well," resignedly, "order a carriage, then, if you will be so kind, sir. I'll give up my cherished walk."

Clever little minx! She had but scant idea of giving up her walk. But Kitty Dunstan was one of those bright, sweet, gracious and lovable girls who are born to obtain their own way easily.

There were times when her father was as much under that bright sway as any one.

"I shall call no carriage," he retorted, smilingly, "when I see that my little girl is set on walking."

With a laugh Kitty darted forward and kissed him.

Then, as if fearful that he might change his mind, she made a little curtsy, turned and walked briskly away.

Hardly had she taken a dozen steps when she bent forward slightly, barely raised her skirt, and displayed two trim little feet daintily booted.

There was a swish of ruffled silken underskirts; two trim, natty ankles flashed, and a peal of bewitching laughter floated back as this healthy sprite went down the driveway and out through the gate at a run as graceful as it was unexpected.

"Kit!" shouted her father, warningly.

Miss Kitty slowed down to a brisk walk, and another peal of laughter floated back.

"Oh, well, I must remember how much stronger and more healthy, and—yes, prettier—she has been since Manley taught her the trick of being so much out of doors," John Dunstan argued with himself as he took a last look at his daughter and turned toward the house.

Miss Kitty was in the highest spirits as she stepped blithely along the road that led down to Woodstock.

"If only I can get papa to take more of these walks with me!" she thought to herself. "It would do him a world of good. He's cooped up too much with his musty old books."

Before she had gone a hundred yards further, Miss Kitty had an uneasy start that made her wish very much that her father were with her.

It wasn't so very much that annoyed her, after all. Just a tramp, who stood by the roadside, watching her as she approached.

"Is he a tramp, after all?" thought Kitty, quickly. "He isn't so very badly dressed. And sometimes workingmen who are splendid fellows have to wear very old clothes at their work. Oh, pshaw! I am getting to be timid, and that will never do. How Frank would laugh at me!"

It mattered very much to her what Frank Manley thought.

She knew that he would not admire a girl who was too easily frightened.

Yet Miss Kitty failed to do herself entire justice.

That she possessed courage she had more than once showed.

Moreover, she had actually taught Manley much that he knew of the necessity of being brave in all moments of life.

She tried to think nothing more of the seedy-looking man as she neared him.

Yet she could not help noting that the fellow was strongly built.

Nor could she help feeling that she did not like the looks of his eyes.

Yet he stood without speaking as she passed by.

Then she experienced a genuine start, for the fellow came up behind her so swiftly and noiselessly that Kitty would not have suspected had she not been on her guard.

Just as she realized that the fellow was behind her on this lonely road, Kitty Dunstan came to a quick stop.

"Well?" she demanded, in a voice that she strove to make steady.

"You're carrying a purse," hinted the fellow greedily.

"Yes," Kitty admitted. There was a sudden, spirited flash in her eyes.

She was standing with her back half turned to him, yet she could see his every movement.

The fellow stood just back of her at her right side.

"And you've got such soft, pretty cheeks," he went on, significantly. "A kiss and a purse!"

"Well?" insisted Kitty, in a voice that was now wonderfully brave.

"I'll take both!"

"You'll get neither!"

"I'll show you!"

"So will I!"

The fellow reached forward, confident of his prey.

But Kitty, all tense and indignant, had waited for this moment.

She drew her right elbow swiftly forward, then let it fly backward.

The point of that elbow landed full in the fellow's stomach, the point of the elbow landing with all the force in Kitty's energetic arm.

"Ouch!"

Struck so sharply in the stomach, the ruffian doubled up.

That it was no light jab was evidenced by his sinking to the ground.

Kitty turned, taking a swift look at the collapsed wretch.

For just an instant there was a look of sympathy in her eyes.

Then that look faded.

The fellow had gotten no more than his deserts, and she knew that the blow that she had planted would not be productive of serious results.

"You're not hurt for long, and you needed the lesson," cried Kitty. "I shall be delighted to resume instruction at any time."

With that, and a toss of her shapely little head, she left him, walking briskly once more toward town.

"Served him right!" she assured herself.

Yet it was hard for her not to feel a sneaking sympathy for the man who had so suddenly found himself deprived of breath, and momentarily rendered too weak to stand upright.

Twice Kitty turned as she walked and looked backward. The first look showed her that the fellow was still lying on the ground.

Undoubtedly she would have turned and gone back, her tender little heart full of remorse, had not the second look shown her that the man was now sitting up, still holding to his paralyzed stomach.

"Perhaps he'll know better than to think of bothering me again," reflected Kitty, as she entered Woodstock.

But would he know better?

That thought haunted her a good deal as she visited the postoffice and also made a couple of little purchases in town.

"If he should wait for me, intent on getting even?" she could not help thinking.

Then to Miss Kitty came the very sensible idea of telephoning home for a carriage.

She turned to go to a public telephone.

"Oh, I won't do that," she muttered, uneasily. "Papa would be sure to tease me. No; I'll walk home. The road will be safe. Even if that wretch should try again to annoy me, I believe I could attend to his case properly."

Once more, however, she found herself inclined to send a message for a carriage.

"I won't do it," she muttered, resolutely, at last. "Even a girl has no right to be so silly. I shan't see that wretch again. Even if I did there would probably be some team or some pedestrian in sight. I am not going to allow my walks to be spoiled in this manner. What would Frank think, if he knew what a little coward I seem likely to become?"

Frank Manley would have thought it highly prudent of her to send for the carriage, but Kitty didn't think so just then.

There was a half-defiant smile on her face as she turned out of the town and started to walk home.

"If I do meet any one," she cried, half gaily to herself, "I must make good my boasts to papa."

CHAPTER III.

THE BOGEY-MAN IN REAL LIFE.

"This makes me think of the baby days," laughed Miss Dunstan to herself, as she stepped rapidly along the road. "Nurse used to tell me such stories about the bogey-man! Mamma discharged the nurse when she found out, but the seed had been sown. Really, I had grown to be quite a girl before I could think at night of the bogey-man without a bad scare."

It was dark, now, as the girl glanced up the lonely hill road.

Though she listened intently, she could not hear the wheels of any vehicle.

Though she would not admit it, even to herself, a boy's shrill and tuneful whistling on that road would have been a comfort.

"The dark and the bogey-man again," Kitty cried, reproachfully.

She had made the same trip often after dark, without a particle of uneasiness.

But now, although she would not coddle herself by agreeing with the idea, there was really some good reason for her to be afraid.

No one, however, who had seen her going by, who had noted the brisk, steady step, the flawless carriage of the lithe body, the half-proud and wholly confident poise of the head, would have believed that this girl was uneasy.

In fact, Kitty had successfully told herself that she was a goose to be afraid.

She was past the spot, now, where she had had the encounter, and there was not a sign of danger.

She was smiling, almost humming a song as she went onward.

"Uh-huh!"

This vocal expression sounded like the growl of a bear.

Here was the bogey-man—a real one in real life.

He was standing right before her, having stepped out from behind a tree.

Kitty stopped, too, but she did not stop smiling.

All the grit that was in her had leaped suddenly to the surface.

This scoundrel meant mischief—murder, perhaps, if the heavy club that he carried in his hand was to be regarded as any indication.

"Good evening!" he said, gruffly, grinning at the thought of how scared this little woman would be.

"Good evening," replied Miss Dunstan.

Her voice was even, steady, and even sweet. There was not the slightest note of fear, nor did her smile desert her.

"Remember me?" growled the wretch.

"Perfectly."

"Glad to see me, I suppose?"

"Is any one ever glad to see you?" demanded the girl, demurely.

"Uh-huh! I'll teach you to be civil to me."

"Does it take one long to learn?" asked Kitty, serenely, yet half doubtfully.

It took the fellow a moment to realize that the girl did not propose to be scared, and that she was treating him with contempt.

"I suppose you feel mighty safe, out here on this road?" the fellow leered.

"I hope you won't mind my saying that your presence here does not increase one's sense of security," Kitty retorted, still sweetly.

"You're using too big words," he growled. "Talk plain."

"Very well, then. Get out of my way!"

"Uh-huh! Don't you wish I would?"

"I wish it so much," rejoined the girl, coolly, "that I will repeat my request. Get out of my way!"

What on earth could this young girl mean by being so unafraid?

He must make her realize that he was in earnest, and that the game was wholly in his own hands.

"You don't know who's boss here, I guess," the fellow growled gruffly. "I am."

"Are you?" she asked, in a tone as if the idea filled her with wonder.

"I am," he retorted with an oath. "And I'm going to show you."

He made a significant gesture with the club, then ordered sternly:

"Get down on your knees and beg!"

"Do what?" echoed Miss Dunstan, as if amazed.

"Down on your knees!"

"What?"

"And beg!"

"I wouldn't know how."

As this reply rippled out, Kitty's bewitchingly curved lips parted, showing the even, white, beautiful teeth.

She was looking at him, saucily defiant now—not a bit afraid.

But just then she bent down to raise her skirts ever so little, and now she stood, eyeing calmly enough this bogey-man in real life.

"If you don't get down on your knees, I'll make you!"

A good deal of a demon was glowing in the fellow's bloodshot eyes.

Raising his club menacingly, he took a step forward.

It was for that step that Kitty had waited.

He advanced his right foot, and, just as he did so, Kitty's own right foot shot forward.

There was nothing playful in that trick. Her foot, small and strongly shod as it was, landed with a shock on the inside of the wretch's shinbone.

The toe of her foot glanced off sharply from the front of the bone.

There was a stifled yell, an oath. The scoundrel staggered, then fell groaning to the earth.

Kitty had the presence of mind to dart in and seize that club.

She hurled it far up the road, then turned, white-faced and suffering almost as much as did her victim.

"I believe you've broke my leg!" roared the wretch.

"It's your shin that is broken—yes," assented Kitty, almost falteringly. "I knew that would be the result. I am sorry—so sorry—but really, you know, you forced me to do it."

"You're a mighty gritty girl," ground out the fellow, between his groans.

"I'm a very sorry one," replied Kitty, gently. "Sorry that you made it necessary for me to defend myself."

"That's twice you've put me out," recounted her victim. "I oughter known'n better'n to monkey with greased lightning!"

"Keep as comfortable as you can," proposed Kitty, "and I'll send help to you just as soon as I can."

"The kind of help my kind get is a lift to jail," growled the man.

"Oh, but surely not when you're so badly hurt?" protested Kitty.

"It'll be jail, just the same, miss."

"Then I'll try to see that it isn't jail this time," promised Kitty quickly. "I believe my father has what they call

'influence.' I shall try to interest him. But I mustn't stand here talking when you need help so badly."

The fellow almost forgot his pain in his curious study of this girl who could fight so successfully and forgive so completely.

Kitty turned to run up the hill, but just then a sound came that caused her to hesitate.

Whump! whump! It was the sound of marching.

Then, in a twinkling, Kitty guessed who it must be. She ran forward, putting herself face to face with Frank and Hal.

"Oh, I'm so glad you're here," she cried, nervously. "I've just hurt a poor man severely."

"Not intentionally, I hope," was Manley's gravely smiling query.

"Of course it was intentional," gasped the girl.

"Eh?"

"I had to," she went on, hurriedly. "The fellow held me up with a club. But come quickly, please!"

Her ideas of speed must have been gratified, for Manley caught her nearer hand in his and raced down the road with her, the other members of the walking squad darting on ahead.

And here Frank found Sato, the Japanese, gravely examining the footpad's injury.

"It's broken, all right," nodded the Jap, looking up.

Kitty gave a little shudder, but Frank began to ply her with questions.

Then the whole story came out, helped by a few explanations from the victim himself, who, though groaning with his pain, displayed not a little admiration of his conquerer's grit.

"My friend," said Manley, grimly, "the next time you feel inclined to attack a defenceless woman, it will be just as well for you to make sure, beforehand, that she isn't an accomplished jiu-jitsu girl."

"What is to be done?" faltered Kitty.

"Well, Sato can give that broken shin its first setting," replied Manley. "We can notify the police at once, and then——"

"The police?" shuddered Kitty.

"Of course," smiled Manley. "You didn't imagine there was a case for the city missionaries, did you?"

"But I've promised this unfortunate man that he shall not go to jail."

"You have, eh?" Frank almost laughed. "Now, what did you think jails are for?"

"But this man has been terribly punished already," protested the girl, tears threatening to take possession of her eyes. "Besides, I've given my word. Papa has influence, and——"

"And so have I," smiled Frank. "I have influence enough to assure you that, if you refuse to make complaint, the courts are powerless to do anything."

"Oh, is that the way the law runs?"

"The very way!" Manley assured her. "So, as you feel that you have promised, I will see to it that this wretch gets nothing more than medical attendance."

"Take my purse, please," begged Kitty, "and pay all the bills."

She extended the hand that held her purse, but Frank drew back.

"That is not necessary," he said, shortly. "The county pays all such expense."

"Yet, surely," argued Kitty, "you can buy him extra attendance—or some comforts—some——"

"See here, my man," demanded Manley, bending over the footpad, "do you begin to get any idea of the kind of young lady you tried to club?"

"She's a brick—a peach!" declared Miss Kitty's victim. "I mean, she's a——"

He paused, unable to think of a wholly respectful word that should express what he wanted to say.

The ignorant fellow's choice of words was not great.

"She's an American girl!" supplied Manley, reverently. But he added, to himself:

"A tender-hearted, true-blue American sweetheart—God bless her!"

"This man can be moved now," said the Jap, looking up from setting the shin. "We can carry him to town as well as a wagon could."

"You'll take the purse?" begged Kitty, pressing it into our hero's hand.

"Yes," whispered Frank. "Though I don't believe there'll be any occasion to spend any of the money."

Kitty looked puzzled.

"You little goose," whispered Frank, teasingly, "can't you guess why I take your purse when I don't expect to use the contents?"

"It must be that you expect to bring it up to the house later in the evening," she whispered, shyly.

"You'd take a prize in a guessing contest," rejoined Manley, finding chance in the dark to press her nearer hand.

Then, aloud, he said:

"Fellows, If you'll carry our man along, I'll see Miss Dunstan safely to her door, and then I'll come into town at once."

They moved off in different ways, Kitty, with her escort feeling utterly indifferent, now, to bogey-men, real or otherwise.

None of the little group had been aware of the presence of one man who crouched back in the shadows under the trees on the other side of the stone wall.

Eager eyes had watched the unusual doings at the roadside.

Strangely enough, in defending herself against a homeless man, Kitty Dunstan had made a dangerous enemy of another and powerful man!

CHAPTER IV.

BELLS AND BELLES.

"Winter, sure enough!"

"Oh, but doesn't it look good?" demanded Hal, pressing his nose against the window pane.

"I'm rather inclined to think that it's the time of the year when one lives the most," rejoined Manley.

They were standing in the office of the gymnasium, looking out upon the first real snowstorm of the season.

There had been flurries before, and the tantalizing inch of whiteness on the ground; but this was the first "real storm."

Nearly four inches of snow had fallen already, since one in the afternoon.

It was now a little after half past three on Wednesday afternoon.

"We can have a snow battle to-morrow," hinted Hal.

"If the snow fall lasts, or if it turns on colder," replied Frank, dubiously. "But I'm afraid this will turn into a rain to-night, with a bare ground to follow to-morrow."

"Croaker!" snorted Hal.

"Oh, I'd like to see the snow in earnest. I don't dare to hope—that's the trouble," protested our hero. "There has been no ice yet that would bear. Did you ever know snow to amount to much until there had been some good skating?"

Hal acknowledged the force of this argument by a sigh.

"I wish we could have some of the old winters such as dad tells about," he remarked, sadly.

"Courage, old chap! We'll soon have enough winter of the real kind."

"We could have a sleighride to-day," hinted Hal.

"All right! Come out for a quick dash behind my grays," proposed Frank. "Or would you rather use your own horses? I'll be your guest on the drive if you prefer."

Both boys laughed.

"But I do wish I had some kind of an old horse, to-day," Hal went on. "It seems tough to see the snow coming down and to realize that one is too poor to own a horse."

"As for me," rejoined Frank, blithely, "I have so many things I want that I can do very well without the one or two things I haven't got."

"But a sleighride would seem mighty good."

"Very good, then, old fellow. I'll get a horse at the livery stable and invite you."

"No, you won't," flared Hal. "You won't spend any money on me that you're saving for your education."

"Oh, I guess the hire of a horse for a couple of hours won't give my education a fatal set-back," declared Manley.

He knew that Hal really longed for the pleasures of ice and snow.

That was enough for Manley to know. If his chum really hungered for a sleighride—why, then, he ought to have one.

But Hal shook his head obdurately, though gratefully.

"It's awfully good of you, Frank, but that's not the kind of a ride that I want."

"Then I'll hire two horses and make it a go," laughed Frank.

He would have been as good as his word, at that, but Hal now joined in the laugh.

"Your joshing, Frank, has shown me how silly the whole idea is. I don't need a sleighride when I'm lucky enough

to have a pair of legs that will carry me as far as I want to go."

Ting-a-ling! It was the telephone bell, and Manley sprang to answer.

"Yes, this is Manley. Greetings, Kit! No; not doing much of anything in particular. Just been coaching some sprinters on the gallery track. No; nothing more to do this afternoon."

Hal was listening, of course, to these replies. He moved closer to the instrument, to hear Kitty Dunstan's voice ask:

"Sure that you've no plans at all?"

"Not a plan!"

"What would you like most of all to do?"

"To make Hal happy," laughed Frank.

"What's that?" in a tone of some surprise.

"I'd like, above all, to make Hal happy, just now."

"Cut that!" whispered Spofford, his face growing a trifle red, despite the fact that Miss Dunstan could not see him.

"And what does Hal need to make him happy?" demanded Kitty.

"Oh, that's a secret between him and myself."

"I've got a message for Hal. Grace is here, since two hours ago. She sends her——"

There was a sound of some vocal scurrying at the other end of the wire, after which Miss Dunstan's voice sounded, demurely:

"Grace says it's all a mistake; that all she wanted to send was her best wishes."

"Hal's disappointed, crestfallen, utterly," replied Manley, which earned for him a vigorous dig in the ribs from his chum.

"Grace and I have a plan. My ponies haven't had much exercise lately. I've had them hitched into a sleigh and brought around to the door. If you and Hal are sure that you have the time, we'll stop at the gym and invite you for a ride. What do you say?"

Frank promptly executed a noisy breakdown on the office floor.

"What's that racket?" demanded Kitty.

"Oh, that was Hal dancing a jig. Do you hear a succession of thuds now?"

"I can't say that I do."

"Hal's out in the gym turning handsprings. Kit, you've made him the happiest youngster alive. That is, Grace did. Hold on! I've got this business all twisted up. I——"

Hal's fist landed heavily between Manley's shoulder blades.

"Ouch!"

"What was that last remark?" asked Kitty, innocently.

"Hal just got so excited over the prospect of a sleighride that he has swallowed a rubber ball and is choking to death. Hurry!"

"Aw, say!" remonstrated Spofford.

"Then you'll both go?" asked Kitty.

"Will we? Try us. And Hal says——"

But Spofford, fearing some new outrage, snatched the receiver from his chum's hand and elbowed Manley out of the way.

"Miss Dunstan," called Hal, over the wire, "your proposal to take us sleighriding is like finding a ticket to a prize-fight—I mean we both look upon it as a piece of huge luck."

"What? Finding a ticket to a prize-fight?" questioned Kitty, in a scandalized voice.

"Miss Dunstan," said Hal, solemnly, "your proposal has filled us with such joy that neither one of us can talk straight. I'm going to ring off, but please hurry down before we go plumb out of our minds!"

Ting-a-ling! Hal rang off, and breathed more easily when he knew that he had stopped his chum from perpetrating any new outrage over the wire.

Hal glanced at the clock.

"It'll take the girls about five minutes to drive down here," he observed.

"About that," agreed Manley.

"I can get decently into my overcoat in about one minute. What on earth shall I do with the other four?"

"Girls or minutes?" questioned Frank, gravely.

"Ah, shut up!" ordered Hal, reddening again.

"I might suggest that you put in your waiting time reading a book on etiquette," hinted Manley. "Only——"

"Well?"

"You couldn't learn enough about politeness in four minutes."

With a growl that was happy, instead of savage, Hal went to where his overcoat hung, and worked himself into the garment.

Spofford had wanted not only a sleighride but a glimpse or two of Grace Scott's bright eyes.

And here were both coming his way as fast as a pair of ponies could travel!

Back there in the gym a lot of fellows who couldn't have better things were working hard with the apparatus.

But he and Manley felt no guiltiness in quitting the gym. Both exercised every morning, and Joe was in there now, at work with some of the more awkward members.

Frank telephoned to his mother concerning his plans, and then he got into his overcoat with a good deal less haste than his chum had shown.

And now the lively peal of tiny silver bells was heard outside.

Miss Kitty was driving her seal ponies up to the door. They were hitched to a moderate-sized Russian sleigh, with one of Mr. Dunstan's grooms perched up behind.

In a twinkling the youngsters were out—before any of the other fellows scented what was happening.

Frank clambered into the front seat beside Miss Kitty. Hal shared the rear seat with Grace Scott.

"I'm devoutly grateful to you both for saving Hal's life," murmured Frank, as the ponies sped away.

"Was it as bad as that?" smiled Kitty.

"It was either a case of his life, or his mind," averred our hero, solemnly. "He was groaning wretchedly for a sleighride or a sight of——"

A vigorous thump resounded between Manley's shoulder blades.

"Don't mind Frank," begged Hal, in some embarrassment. "The delirium has been growing on him ever since he saw the first flakes falling this afternoon."

Frank had a chance, now, to admire to the full the soft brightness of Miss Dunstan's cheeks in that crisp, snow-laden air.

Furs became her, our hero thought, and the snowflakes nestling in the fur made him think of something more priceless than jewels.

She had little to say, but kept her gaze on the road and on the ponies, which animals she was forcing along at their best speed.

"You're taking the road to Bradford, eh?" Manley asked. "If it will suit you as well," replied Kitty. "You can't guess why I want to go there, I suppose."

"At a guess, you want to go to the hospital and see the man whom you downed so readily night before last."

"I want to see how the poor fellow is getting along," nodded the girl.

Her desire to go on this errand of mercy did not lessen her value in Manley's eyes.

The first sleighride! Can there be a greater treat for lovers of outdoors?

The snow was still falling slowly, but in big, floating flakes.

There was just enough of snow under the runners to make the slipping as easy as could be desired.

The ponies, fast at all times, seemed almost doubly so when they drew a vehicle on runners.

"I'm taking new delight in the splendid little animals," observed Kitty, as she gave slack rein on a level stretch.

The ponies made the most of their liberty, carrying the sleigh flying over the snow to the sweet tune of the soft, high bells.

There was life enough on the road, too, for this thoroughfare by the river, seldom popular with pedestrians, made an ideal road for driving over the snow.

Half way to Bradford they met and passed Tod Owen, driving a spanking bay to a cutter.

Clara Dodge sat beside him.

Miss Dodge bowed sweetly to Kittie, who returned the salutation, while Frank and Hal lifted their hats.

But there had been a feud between the two girls at boarding school. Miss Dodge, an older girl, had been "mean," which Miss Kitty had never quite forgiven.

And now, that Clara was much in Tod's company, the feud had taken on a new phase, in which each girl took especial delight in her champion's victory over the other girl's champion.

So far Miss Kitty had had much the better of it, but Tod was becoming a greater and greater athlete as time went on, and the tables might yet be turned on Miss Dunstan as they had been at boarding school.

"Tod'll have to turn about soon," whispered Kitty, smiling.

"Why?" asked Manley, innocently.

"Because that big, raw-boned horse of his can pass my ponies like a shot."

"Tod wouldn't find any sport in such a race as that."

"Clara Dodge would, though."

"I don't see why."

"You don't understand girls, Frank, I am afraid."

"Some girls, perhaps not. There's only one girl I'm interested in understanding."

"Very prettily said," pronounced Kitty, with the air of a critic. "There, do you see that Tod is driving back like the wind?"

Tod was, in fact, coming down the road as fast as he could make his father's fast horse travel.

But Kitty quickly brought the ponies to a standstill, then jumped nimbly out and began to examine the harness.

As Tod drove by Miss Dodge looked annoyed about something.

But Kitty's eyes were dancing brightly over something when, after a while, she stepped in once more, aided by Manley, and gathered up the reins.

Manley said nothing, but began to wonder if he was learning more about girls.

It was a glorious drive, with the first half of it over much too soon to suit any of the four interested in it.

Kitty drew rein before the hospital and asked all hands to go inside with her, leaving the groom to look after the ponies.

But Kitty's particular patient, who was enrolled under the name of Roughsedge, was just then in the hands of the surgeon, who was dressing the broken shin.

As they could not see the patient, Kitty satisfied herself with handing the head nurse some money under the pledge that it should be spent on delicacies for Roughsedge.

Then, after asking several questions about the patient's condition, Kitty led her little party out once more.

At the door they were met by the groom, who came dashing up the steps out of breath and badly frightened:

"Oh, Miss Dunstan," he faltered, "I—I don't know what to say. The ponies are gone—stolen!"

CHAPTER V.

THE TRAIL IN THE SNOW.

"The ponies gone?" echoed Miss Kitty, aghast.

"Stolen?" echoed Manley.

"Yes, sir; yes, ma'am."

"But you were left in charge of them, Varney," observed Kitty.

"Yes, ma'am; and I stepped down the street, only a minute, to get a cigar——"

"Where is it, then?" asked Kitty.

The man looked too confused to answer.

Frank noted the smell of liquor on the man's breath. That explained all as far as the man's act was concerned.

"Which way were the ponies taken?" asked Frank, quickly.

"That way, I think," quivered the groom, pointing southward.

It was plain that the fellow was so scared and confused that anything he could say would be of but little value.

Kitty wanted to say several things, and for that very reason she didn't say any of them.

She hated to wound other people's feelings, and certainly at this moment the groom looked punished enough.

Frank, after an instant's thought, took charge of matters, to Kitty's great relief.

"Varney," he directed, "follow the young ladies to the hotel and ask the landlord's wife to look after them in the ladies' parlor. Stay by within call of the young ladies."

"But can't I help you, sir?"

"I hardly think so."

"What are you going to do?" asked Kitty.

"I'm going to find the ponies or know the reason for failure," rejoined Manley. "Don't worry. They can't have gotten far, and we ought soon to be on the track of the pair. That's what the police and telephones are for."

"I hope the ponies haven't disappeared for good," choked Miss Dunstan. "I have grown so fond of them!"

"Oh, we'll find them easily enough," promised Manley, blithely. "But we can't do it by remaining here. Varney, see if you can be more reliable in your present trust than you were in the last one."

Hal was at his chum's side as they moved quickly away.

"Do you suppose kids stole the rig for a lark?" was Spofford's first idea.

"That may be," Frank answered, "but I hardly think so."

"Then what can be the answer?"

"Well, in the first place, ponies and sleigh are worth somewhere around eight hundred dollars."

"Horse thief, then?"

"Looks that way, for Kit isn't apt to have enemies who'd do a thing like that."

"How about Clara Dodge?"

"Out of the question for her to be a horse thief."

"Oh, of course," agreed Hal. "But as a joke?"

"This won't turn out to have been any joke. And Miss Dodge wouldn't go so far."

"She and Tod might do something of the sort, just for the mischief of the thing."

"Guess again," retorted Frank. "Tod wouldn't touch a Dunstan rig for a thousand dollars."

They were down in the square now. No one there had seen the ponies pass that way.

Manley had half expected this, but had now settled in his mind that the missing rig had not been driven in that direction.

Then Varney's information that the ponies had been driven to the southwest was correct, after all.

Further on Manley received confirmation of this. A loafer in the blacksmith's shop had seen the seal ponies and the Russian sleigh go by.

"Who was driving?" Manley asked, quickly.

"A man."

"What sort of man?"

"I didn't notice him particularly."

"Was any one else in the sleigh?"

"No."

"Describe the man as well as you can. Was he well-dressed?"

"I think he was."

"Be careful about that," begged Manley. "The average horse thief is not likely to be well dressed."

"Oh, but I think this man was," insisted Manley's informant.

But as to how the man was dressed, or how old he was, or whether he was short or tall, were questions to which only the vaguest answers could be had.

Yet our hero's informant remembered that the ponies had been driven at a very rapid gait.

Moreover, Manley ascertained that the driver had kept to the same southerly direction until the rig had been lost to sight in the darkness of early evening.

"We've got to get a horse to follow with," declared Manley, as they turned back to the town.

"Why? Can't we run?" asked Hal.

"It would be a slippery track, and I'm afraid we've got a good many miles to cover."

Frank turned in at a livery stable and bargained for a swift horse. While waiting for the rig to be hitched up he talked with Kitty over the 'phone, explaining to her the little that had been learned.

"It seems to me, Kit," he wound up, "that it would be best for you to 'phone home for another rig, and to return. It looks as if Hal and I would be away and busy for hours."

"If you think it best, then," assented Miss Dunstan.

"By all means."

"But papa is very likely to come over as soon as he hears from me."

"If your father comes, as I hope he will, then he takes command of your course. Now, I must hurry. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, dear. Good luck!"

Hal was already in the light, trim cutter, behind a beast that looked as if it could travel over the snow.

Frank jumped in, gathered up the reins, and away they raced.

"It looks, old chap, as if you would have your fill of sleighing to-night."

"I'd rather have none in a year, than get it this way," uttered Spofford, dolefully.

They drove rapidly down the road, and out into the country until they came to the first turn at which Manley thought it worth while to inquire.

There were three houses here, but none of the occupants of them had seen the pony team.

"Shall we go up this road to the west?" asked Hal.

"Yes: I've decided to. We don't have to go far before we'll know whether to keep on."

"Do you know that you haven't asked the police to telephone?"

"Yes: it would do no good."

"Why?"

"Whoever stole the ponies will know enough to keep off of any road that would be covered by the police. That's why I've decided to go up this road. It doesn't lead to any town. I'm sure that the thief planned to avoid towns—at least until late at night."

They had returned to the cutter, and Manley was driving rapidly, at the right of the road, while Hal, from his side, held a lantern out over the road.

"Make out any pony tracks?" queried Manley.

"Not yet. There are too many tracks. Everybody who owns a sleigh has been out this afternoon."

Half a mile further on the road was much more narrow.

"You drive now," directed Manley, "and let me have the lantern."

He held the light out over the right side of the vehicle, closely inspecting the snow.

Quarter of a mile further on he suddenly cried:

"Hold up!"

Manley was out of the cutter like a flash.

"Here's where the rig turned out, on account of the narrow road," muttered Frank. "And here, in this new track, are ponies' hoof marks."

"Sure enough!" agreed Hal, after inspecting the marks in the new snow.

"Now, we know we're on the right track," cried Frank. "We've only to keep on, watching at every turn."

"Here comes some one," reported Hal, pointing up the road.

Two lanterns were visible on a vehicle that appeared to be coming slowly toward them.

Frank waited as patiently as he could for the newcomer to get up with him.

The vehicle turned out to be a farm pung drawn by a pair of horses.

Manley quickly called the driver to a halt, plying him with questions.

"Sure I've seen the rig," nodded the farmer. "'Bout two miles further up, near Eichorn's. Say, the feller must a-wanted to kill them ponies. He was driving like he wanted to kill the beasts."

"Perhaps he did," commented Frank, inwardly. But aloud he asked for a description of the man who was driving the ponies.

"My lights fell right on him," replied the farmer, "so I got a good look."

In fact the farmer gave such a close, detailed description that Frank gasped.

"I'm much obliged to you," nodded Frank, jumping into the cutter and picking up the reins. "I must hurry."

"You'll have to, sure, if you want to come up with them ponies," assented the farmer.

"Any idea who the rascal is?" demanded Hal, as Frank drove rapidly.

"Of course, and so have you."

"Who is he?"

"The description fits like a new suit of clothes on Briggs, that honey-looking chap with Southey over at Barberville."

"By jove, it does!" nodded Hal, eagerly. "But what object would he have?"

"That's what I want to find out," declared Manley. "I won't rest until I find out, either."

The horse that Manley drove was up to the claims that had been made for the beast.

He carried the boys rapidly over the ground for two miles, and then another mile.

At the driveway gate of a farm house Manley suddenly ordered his chum to halt.

"Here are the tracks where the ponies have gone in," uttered Frank. "I fancy we shan't have to look much further before we find the animals themselves."

Hal, driving slowly up the driveway, Manley hurried on ahead over the snow, holding his lantern close to the white-covered earth.

"Jupiter!" Frank exclaimed, suddenly, stopping.

"What's wrong?" demanded Hal, reining up.

"One of the ponies fell here, as if played out."

Hal was quickly out, and at his chum's side.

"The ponies were taken to the barn," muttered Frank. "It looks as if one of the poor brutes staggered. Come on over to the house."

They were quickly in the kitchen, surrounded by the farmer, his wife and their four children.

Yes, the ponies were in the barn, one of them apparently foundered, and the other badly used up.

"But I don't know how they came in the yard," explained the farmer. "I found them there half an hour ago. My boy and I had a tough job getting the foundered animal into the barn. The critter's done for, and I'm afraid the other animal is about as badly off."

"Did you get any glimpse of the driver?" demanded Frank.

"Not a peek. Want to see the ponies?"

But Frank shook his head. He inquired where the nearest veterinary lived, and asked the farmer to go after that doctor of horses, adding that Mr. Dunstan would cover all expense in the matter.

Then our hero went out into the yard again, to look for footprints of the man who had driven the poor little brutes so viciously.

Nor were the footprints hard to discover.

CHAPTER VI.

"UP TO MR. SOUTHEY!"

"Go into the house and get a sheet of paper—a long one, if you can," directed Manley.

Hal soon came back with the desired article.

With a pencil Frank swiftly made an exact copy of the footprint, in correct proportion.

Of the foot that Manley selected, the right one, there was an additional trace in the distinct prints of two nail-heads in the sole of the boot.

Frank called the farmer to note the correctness of his drawing of the print of the boot.

There was no telephone at this farm house.

After a few more words of direction to the farmer, Manley re-entered the cutter, and, with Hal, drove to the nearest telephone, more than a mile away.

He was fortunate enough to get Mr. Dunstan on the wire at the hotel in Bradford.

Our hero gave Mr. Dunstan the news, and then discussed with him a plan of action.

"It's all right, so far," Frank dropped, by way of explanation, as he hurried out to his chum in the cutter.

"And now—what?" asked Hal, as they whirled away.

"We're going direct to Barberville, and put the whole thing up to Mr. Southey!"

Hal almost gasped.

"What connection has Southey with this outrage?"

"I don't know, but I mean to find out. Poor Kit's pet ponies have been probably killed, and it certainly was done with a motive. We're going to make Southey explain, if we can."

"Oh, he'll simply deny," predicted Hal.

"Let him deny, if he can. I don't believe Briggs will be able to lie out of this thing."

Manley was silent during most of the drive to Barberville. He was thinking hard, and Hal was too sensible to bother him with questions.

Spofford had plenty of time to do his own thinking. For one thing, he felt that he was getting his sleighing in earnest, and, under the circumstances, he was sure that he was not enjoying it.

Just before entering Barberville, Frank stopped at the home of a constable. That officer, after a short talk with Frank, came out and crowded himself into the cutter.

They went direct to the hotel.

In the office Frank discovered that the individual named Briggs had just returned after an absence of some hours. He had gone upstairs, presumably to Southey's room.

"We wish to go up unannounced," explained Frank.

The clerk looked surprised, but the confirmation by the constable smoothed matters.

A minute later Hal and Frank were at Southey's door. They listened and soon heard voices.

"It was a fool thing to do," exclaimed one man, angrily. Undoubtedly the speaker was Southey.

"Oh, I suppose you're bound to say," growled another voice. "But you know how I happened to be there, and it seemed as good a way as was possible of getting square with the Dunstan girl."

"Sh!"

After that the voices were inaudible. Frank listened in vain for more light on the matter.

But he had heard enough to establish beyond a question that Briggs was actually the fellow who had stolen the ponies and who had tried to drive them to death.

Moreover, this had all been done for the purpose of "getting square with the Dunstan girl."

What possible grudge could these two men have against unsuspecting Kitty?

Frank thrilled with impatience as he stood listening for another scrap of the conversation.

The constable was there in the background, prepared to arrest Briggs, but now our hero was in great doubt.

If these men had reasons for wanting to "get square" with Kitty, then Manley felt that he was on the track of a matter vastly more important than the stealing of the ponies.

"I must let Mr. Dunstan decide what is to be done here," he whispered to Hal.

The two chums were about to depart, when the next door up the corridor opened suddenly.

It was Southey who stepped out, and who stood as if transfixed with astonishment when he caught sight of the two boys.

As for Manley, he was bemoaning his stupidity in not having guessed that the two rooms might be connected by an inside door.

In that brief instant Southey's eagle eyes roved from the boys to the waiting constable and back again.

Not a word was spoken. Both sides seemed too much astonished for speech.

Then, as suddenly as he had appeared, Southey turned and vanished into the room out of which he had stepped.

The second that he was gone, Manley stole down the corridor, signaling to Hal and the officer to follow.

Frank's mind was working with the speed of lightning.

At the head of the stairs he stopped.

"Remain here, please, just out of sight," he whispered to the constable. "If those fellows try to pass down this way before you hear from me, nab them both. Come along, Hal."

His chum Manley sent to watch the window from outside, while Frank himself hurried to a telephone closet.

Mr. Dunstan should be at home by this time. Fortunately he was.

A quick consultation over the wire followed.

Then Frank hurried back to the constable.

"You needn't wait here any longer," whispered our hero. "Come outside. If you will serve us for a little while I am authorized to state that you will be well paid."

The constable was posted outside, near the main entrance to the hotel. Hal remained where he was, while Frank hurried to another point by which an escape from the hotel might be attempted.

It was a long wait for more than an hour. The snow had turned to sleet, and the latter at last became a fine drizzle that might, at any moment, turn to a downpour.

It was wet, disagreeable work. But at length Mr. Dunstan arrived with two men who had had some rural experience in detective work. Through the night these men would watch for possible moves by Southey or Briggs. In the morning more skilled detectives for whom Mr. Dunstan had wired, would be on the job.

Mr. Dunstan thought of everything. He hired a man to return Manley's hired rig to Bradford. He paid the con-

stable well, and more, in addition, to remain through the night at the orders of the watchers.

"Boys," said Mr. Dunstan, "you haven't had any supper yet. Do you think you could hold out until you reach my house?"

Could they?

Was there any place in the world where they would as soon find themselves than under the Dunstan roof, facing such a supper as Kitty's training in housekeeping fitted her to offer.

It was a long and puzzled conversation that took place under the Dunstan roof.

"What on earth those scoundrels can have against my daughter, I can't imagine," declared Mr. Dunstan. "Not that I care much, though, now that I am forewarned. Manley, you have done a wonderful stroke. I shall never forget this night's work. You are invaluable!"

High enough praise, this, to make Manley glow and tingle inwardly; for our hero had been often uneasy as to just how Kitty's father regarded his attentions to Miss Kitty.

But Frank, like the others, racked his brain in vain in trying to solve the mystery of menace that hung over his little American sweetheart!

CHAPTER VII.

SOUTHEY PLAYS A GAME AGAINST THE SLEUTHS.

"Their game seems to be blocked."

John Dunstan delivered himself of this opinion with an air of a good deal of satisfaction.

It was Friday afternoon.

He had dropped into the Woodstock gym for a little talk with Manley.

Our hero was in indoor running togs.

He had been up on the gallery track when Mr. Dunstan called for him.

"Oh, I'm sorry to have called you away from your work, Manley," exclaimed the village magnate when our hero, dripping and glowing, came down to the office.

"That's all right, sir," Frank answered. "I was doing a fast three miles as a preparation for to-morrow's race."

"And how many had you done?"

"Nearly two, sir."

"Dear me! I came at a bad time, I see."

"Not at all, sir," responded Manley, amiably. "Later on I can go up on the track and do some more running."

As a matter of fact our hero might have been irritated had any one else called him from the track.

But this man was Kitty Dunstan's father!

Moreover, Frank knew that his caller had come on a matter that seemed to concern Miss Dunstan very closely—the affair of Southey and Briggs.

But, instead, Mr. Dunstan seemed more inclined to talk of other matters.

"What is the race to-morrow? My daughter told me, but I was absorbed in other subjects at the time."

"Why, it's a series of races," replied Frank. "That's what we've been training for recently. There'll be a hundred-yard dash. Every one seems to concede that to Jackets. Then there's to be a quarter-mile, a half and a five-miler. It's for the last-named that I am putting forth every effort."

"With what club do you compete?"

"Why, sir, with the Bradfords."

Frank felt surprised. He had supposed that Mr. Dunstan more closely followed the club's doings.

"Any prizes?" questioned Kitty's father.

"Why, yes, sir—the Crozier trophies."

"Crozier?"

"Why, sir, you remember the part that we took in that Crozier matter last week?"*

"Yes; of course I remember. And so they are offering trophies?"

"A gold and silver medal for each race, and in addition a magnificent silver vase to the club whose runner wins the five-miler. Haven't you seen the vase in Smith's drug-store window?"

"I saw something there, but did not notice it particularly."

What ailed Mr. Dunstan?

It was clear that his mind was miles away from anything that he was discussing.

Would he never come to the point?

By way of a hint Frank remained silent when the old gentleman ceased speaking.

"Manley," went on John Dunstan, after a long pause, "why, do you figure, those rascals over at Barberville have any ill feeling toward my daughter?"

"I haven't the slightest idea, sir," replied Frank. "But you have professional detectives at work on the matter. Have they learned nothing?"

"Very little, I am sorry to say."

"Humph!"

"I know, Manley, that you have not the highest opinion of detectives."

"Oh, but I have—of some, sir. But there are a great many detectives who are hardly worth their salt."

"I wonder if my pair are worth anything?"

"You will have to judge, sir, by what they do for you."

"So far they have learned nothing. But they have kept Southey and Briggs under surveillance."

"What are Southey and Briggs doing?"

"Absolutely nothing, except to live at the hotel and take things easily."

"What do you make of that, sir?"

"What do you make of it, Manley?"

"That the scoundrels knew that they are either watched or are likely to be."

"I think, sir, that your detectives probably have been

*The manner in which the Up and At 'Em Boys earned the undying gratitude of Mr. Crozier and his daughter is stirringly told in No. 13 of Frank Manley's Weekly. EDITOR.

clumsy, and have allowed Southey and Briggs to see that they are being shadowed."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Dunstan, looking greatly annoyed.

"Oh, that's not so bad, after all," replied Frank, cheerfully. "If Southey and his associate know that they are being watched, then they won't dare to do anything."

"Their game seems to be blocked," observed Mr. Dunstan.

"That's it, exactly, sir. And if you keep up the work of the detectives, the rascals are very likely to clear out in sheer weariness."

"Why, as I live!" cried Mr. Dunstan, looking out of the window, "here comes one of the detectives, now."

It was Mr. Clayton who came up the steps, quickly entering the office.

"Anything new?" asked Mr. Dunstan, quickly.

"Yes, sir. I tried to find you, and was told that you had come here. But how about talking in a public place like this?" asked Clayton, looking into the gym.

"You can go into the board-room," suggested Manley.

Clayton started for the door of the board room. Mr. Dunstan signalled that Frank was to follow.

"The scoundrels have stolen a march on us," announced Clayton, looking a trifle sheepish.

"Not got away from you?" cried Mr. Dunstan.

"No; they couldn't have done that. But they've made a new move in the game, and we can't follow the move."

"Perhaps you would better explain at once what you mean," suggested Manley.

"Well," pursued Clayton, "I'm afraid that our men have discovered that we are on their track. So they were both down at the depot this afternoon, waiting for the New York train. Powell and I were both there, although, of course, we both kept out of sight.

"Well, the New York train came in and stopped. We thought our men intended to board the train. But they didn't. They simply stood there near the mail car. Just as the train was pulling out, Southey handed an envelope to one of the mail clerks."

"Why should they take all that trouble?" demanded Mr. Dunstan.

"It was because they suspected they were being shadowed. Had they mailed a letter at the post office we would have learned the address. So they handed it in at the mail car, and the letter was enclosed in a blank envelope at that. So we couldn't get a chance at the address."

"You didn't board the train, then?"

"It wouldn't have been of any use, Mr. Dunstan. Mail clerks have their orders, and wouldn't have told us the address. It's different with these country postmasters. We can handle them. But the mail clerks are better posted. They know the danger of revealing addresses."

"What could have been the object of that letter?" wondered Mr. Dunstan.

"Why, sir, Powell and I think that, since this pair are under surveillance, they are sending instructions elsewhere as to what to do. The next move will be made by the recipient of that letter, and all our watching of Southey and Briggs now will lead to nothing."

John Dunstan glanced at Manley, who nodded.

"So that——" hesitated the old man.

"The detectives have been outwitted," interposed Manley, quietly.

Clayton started, flushing, but he nodded.

"We've been beaten in this move," he assented. "But we may pick up things again. Powell is watching them until I get back."

"Can't you telegraph ahead to some one and find out the address of that letter?" questioned Mr. Dunstan.

"It wouldn't be any use," negatived Clayton. "No one can get that information from a postal clerk."

"Excuse me a moment, please," put in Manley.

He hurried back to the locker-room, pulled off his togs, swiftly, stood under a warm shower for a moment, then plunged into the pool.

From this he came out dripping, and hurriedly towelled himself.

Then the young athlete dressed in feverish haste.

He was back in the office in less than five minutes.

As he stepped into the board-room he found Mr. Dunstan, looking more annoyed than ever and drumming the table. Clayton looked like a man who knows that he has not a good excuse.

"I can't say that you and your associate have done very well in this matter," observed Mr. Dunstan, somewhat testily.

"Do you wish to call us off from the case, then?" asked Clayton, promptly.

Mr. Dunstan caught the shake of Manley's head and replied:

"No; not yet. You may yet discover something that will set the case straight for us."

"Then I shall hurry back to Powell's assistance," suggested Clayton, rising to go.

Again catching a signal from our hero, Mr. Dunstan made haste to assent.

"I must leave you now for a few minutes, Mr. Dunstan. I have something that must be attended to," observed our hero, as soon as the crestfallen detective had gone.

"I'm going home," announced Mr. Dunstan, rising.

"I hope, earnestly, sir, that you won't take the detectives off this matter yet."

"Then you think they may be of some use, after all?"

"Why, certainly, sir. They'll at least keep Southey and Briggs blocked, which is a matter of great importance."

"I'll take your advice, then, Manley."

"You're walking home, sir?"

"No; I have left a carriage up on Main Street."

Frank left Kitty's father at the railroad track.

Our hero's own course took him to the depot, where, with a pile of blanks under his hand, he began to pen a telegram.

By the time that he had finished the despatch, Jerry Lanagan, the night operator, had come on duty. He was one of Manley's especial friends.

"Whew!" muttered Jerry, after a glance at the message.

"You're mum, of course, Jerry."

"As dumb as an oyster," declared the shrewd young Irishman.

"You'll rush that through?"

"Will I?" demanded Jerry. "Clear out, while I sit down at the key and get busy."

There was a peculiar smile on Manley's lips as he stepped leisurely back to the gym.

"There's one trick the detectives don't seem to have learned," he muttered to himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CROZIER TROPHIES.

"This looks more like the first meets the two clubs had," remarked Kitty Dunstan.

"In what way?" asked Grace Scott.

"Why, in the first days the boys had few events on a field to which admissions were paid. You don't remember those days. I saw quite a few meets even before—well——"

"Before you were well acquainted with the Woodstock members," suggested Grace.

"Thank you," acknowledged Kitty. "In those early days the club hadn't gone as far, and didn't need as much money as it does now. So the events were very simple, and only the people came who took a personal interest in some member."

"But you used to come before you knew any of the Woodstock members very well?" quizzed Grace, rather mischievously.

"Oh, well——" began Kitty, coloring a trifle, then pausing in her speech.

They were over at the Bradford training grounds, where the running races were to take place.

These training grounds had been used during the fall season, in training work.

There was a very fast half-mile track here, which was the reason for preferring the training grounds to the athletic field.

Less than four hundred people had come to see the races to-day. These were the people who were genuinely interested in the sports of the rival clubs, and who looked upon the events as something more than a mere show.

Naturally, Bradford people predominated at this meet on home grounds.

Most conspicuous of all to-day was old Hek Owen, father of Tod Owen, the Bradford captain.

It was Hek who had principally financed his son's club whenever it needed more money than came in in the gate receipts.

For a year Hek had been compelled to admit that Woodstock had a club much superior to the Bradford organization.

Yet Hek firmly believed that the day was at hand when Bradford would outstrip its rival at all, or nearly all, points.

There were no regular seats at this training ground. But Hek had provided settees enough for those whom he regarded as being guests of distinction.

While Kitty and her chum were walking about, Mr. Dunstan was already seated with Mr. Jackson, Woodstock's richest man, and Mrs. Jackson and Fannie.

Hek had placed a campstool close to this party, and was holding forth on his favorite theme.

"Manley started his youngsters right on the running question," declared Hek. "He knew, better than my lad did, that running is the basis of all athletics. So, for a long time, Woodstock beat our boys out at running. Naturally, therefore, Woodstock went on beating Tod's club at almost everything.

"Then, at last, I decided to take a strong hand in the training of our lads. I've kept them at their running for a mighty long time, and I tell you, our lads can run some now. I've watched the work of each one of our lads, and I've separated the poor runners out as chaff. They won't have much show in our club's doings after this.

"Now, you know, Mr. Dunstan, and you, Mr. Jackson, and you, madam, that I make no bones of my effort to train Bradford to beat Woodstock. So to-day's races are to be a strong test to show me just where Bradford stands with Woodstock. If we are easy winners to-day, then I shall know that I have my lads where I want them."

Mr. Dunstan yawned behind his hand. He had never been able to appreciate old Hek, whom he regarded as a tiresome individual.

Not quite so with Mr. Jackson. There had been bad blood between the two clubs in the past, and Mr. Jackson knew and appreciated Hek's untiring efforts to establish between the two clubs the good feeling that now existed.

"You've seen the trophies, of course?" asked Hek, appealing to Mr. Dunstan.

"A mere glimpse," replied that gentleman, stiffly.

"Fine, aren't they?" bubbled Hek.

"I really can't say," replied John Dunstan, and stifled another yawn.

"Why," uttered Hek, "I thought you were real interested in all that concerns the Woodstock boys."

"I'm here as escort for my daughter, who, I believe, is interested in most things athletic," replied Mr. Dunstan.

He rose, and with a bow to the Jacksons and a mere nod to Hek, he strolled away.

That put the damper on Hek's spirits for the time being.

He tried to talk with the Jacksons, who were much more cordial, but at last rose and walked off to the locker house.

Miss Crozier was expected to be present. Her father, who was still somewhat ill, could not attend.

Hek wandered over to the locker house, where he inspected the medals as they lay on a table between the two dressing rooms. Then he cast a hungry look at the handsome vase.

Here Joe, who had dressed for the half-mile, found the old patron of the Bradfords.

"Which have you selected for the home team?" smiled Prescott.

"Why, lad, of course I hope to see all of them left here in Bradford."

"Do you expect it?" queried Joe.

"That would be saying too much, lad," was Hek's response. "But this, of course, I know—that any medals that are carried over to Woodstock will be taken there by mighty swift runners."

"How about the vase trophy?" Joe wanted to know.

"It's a fine thing," rejoined Hek, non-committally. "It ought to be, when it cost eight hundred dollars."

Frank came out and found them there. His greeting of Hek was decidedly cheery.

"Manley, can I have a word with you?" asked Hek, after some fidgeting.

"Why, certainly, sir."

Frank had not yet dressed. They went outside the locker house together.

"Manley," asked Hek, after an awkward pause, "do you know why Mr. Dunstan doesn't like me?"

There was an appeal in the old man's voice that touched Manley to the quick.

According to all stories, old Hek might not have been all that he should have been in earlier years, but certainly he was doing his best to live the past completely down.

"Why, Mr. Owen, I don't even know that he doesn't like you," replied Manley.

That may have been something of a stretch of the truth, yet our hero felt justified in speaking as he did.

"Every time I try to say a few words to John Dunstan," complained Hek, tremulously, "he seems bent on shutting me up. Yes, that's the word. Why, he looks at me as if he would freeze me. Now, see here, Manley, you know about some things even better than I do. What's the matter with me? Ain't I enough of a gentleman to suit John Dunstan?"

"You're a mighty good old fellow all the way through," retorted Manley, feelingly. "If that doesn't appeal to everyone, don't you worry. Those who like you best are those who know you best."

"But what can there be that Dunstan doesn't like?"

"Mr. Dunstan is a rather severe and austere man, at times. He doesn't always allow people to be as intimate with him as they may desire. It's his personal peculiarity, but he's as straightforward a man as was ever known. Now, can't we talk about some other matters, Mr. Owen?"

They started down the grounds together, walking close to each other and apparently much absorbed in their conversation.

As they walked, Manley slipped one arm around Hek's shoulder and listened intently to what the old man was saying.

Kitty had rejoined her father.

"I'm glad you've come," said Mr. Dunstan. "I've just been bored about as badly as I could endure."

"By whom, papa?"

"By that vulgar fellow, Hek Owen. I've tried to show him many a time that I'm not interested in him, but he won't take a hint."

"Why, papa, Mr. Owen is harmless and big-hearted. He's half the life in the rivalry between the two clubs."

"You are a girl with extraordinary opinions," said her father, gruffly.

Just then Mr. Dunstan's gaze fell on Hek and our hero.

"Look at that disgusting sight," he snapped. "Manley making such a public show of esteem for that old bore! And surely Manley must know how little I approve of Hek Owen."

"Then there must be a lot of good in Mr. Owen," said Kitty, stanchly. "Frank Manley isn't often mistaken in people."

"Yet he must know that I don't approve of the old bore."

"What has that to do with it, papa?" asked Kitty, gently, but her heart began to beat more slowly, and an uneasy pain came to her breast.

"Why, if Manley cares to be received in our home," said Mr. Dunstan, coldly, "he should be careful as to the company with which he allows himself to be identified."

Manley went by, within a few yards, with his arm still on Hek's shoulder.

John Dunstan looked at the pair, disgustedly, then glanced quickly away.

In that same instant the situation dawned on Miss Kitty.

"Papa must have been very stiff indeed. He has hurt Mr. Owen, who has gone to Frank to ask what the matter is. This is Frank's answer."

Kitty's generous heart throbbed now at the sight.

"It's a splendid, noble thing to do!" she cried within herself. "By this act Frank shows himself every inch a man—and a brave one at that! Frank is fit to be anyone's hero!"

But now there was a new quiver of excitement in the air.

The races were being called. The sprinters and the quarter men, in their togs, and muffled up in warm dressing gowns, had gathered at the starting line.

As there were to be four races, each club was limited to two entries in a given race, and no runner could enter in more than one event.

Frank, still walking with Mr. Owen, had come over to where the Dunstans were now standing, they having given up their seats in order to move about and keep warm in the crisp December air.

Hek stopped beside Clara Dodge, while Frank moved up to Kitty's side.

"There can't be any doubt about the first event, can there?" asked Kitty.

"I don't believe there's much," smiled Frank. "Jackets ought to be able to get away from everyone else."

"Don't be too sure of that," warned Hek. "Distleigh has been showing some amazing speed."

Now the sprinters were getting set, after taking up position at their marks. The spectators crowded forward to see the start of this first race.

It was a tense moment, hardly relieved by the crack of the starter's pistol.

A hundred yards is swiftly covered by real sprinters. A few fleeting seconds, and then——

Jackets had been beaten for the first time in his athletic career!

Distleigh had won by a scant two yards.

Frank rubbed his eyes as if to rouse himself.

What on earth could be the matter?

Jackets came, drooping, from the track.

Frank hurried forward to meet him.

"Too bad, little one. But we can't win always. Cheer up! You look as if you wanted to cry."

"Perhaps I do feel a little that way," assented young Winston, miserably.

"What? An athletic cry? I never saw that yet. Don't make a goose of yourself, little one."

"Well, then, I won't," agreed Winston, a smile suddenly rippling over his face.

He straightened up, squared his shoulders and marched gamely to the locker house while the announcer proclaimed that the sprint had been won by Distleigh, of Bradford.

Now the runners and the officials were grouping for the start of the quarter-mile.

McGuire and Humphrey were to run for Woodstock in this event. McGuire was looked upon as being much the better of the pair.

Opposed to them by Bradford were Shirley and Moore.

Frank slipped over to ask, anxiously of Mike:

"Do you think you can win this race?"

"Sure," grinned the Irish boy.

"Don't lose a trick, then."

"Sure I won't. If I lose it'll be to an all-around better man."

Frank hurried back to Kitty's side.

"Is McGuire safe?" she whispered.

"He's a good man, and the best we could put in the quarter. But of course he's up against good runners."

Kitty bit her lips, throbbed—and waited.

Then came the pistol's sound.

McGuire made a winning start, with Humphrey not far behind.

Moore kept to the rear throughout, but how Shirley dashed forward!

Manley's breath came quickly as he watched the two leaders.

At the eighth Shirley was trying to forge ahead.

McGuire held to him stubbornly, but could not seem to get the lead.

At the three-sixteenths, as Manley's eye restlessly measured the distance, the situation was the same.

Now the two hard-fighting leaders seemed to leap at the finish-line.

Suddenly Shirley seemed to put on a wonderful spurt. He dashed across first, winner by at least three yards.

"A Bradford day!" roared some of the joyous home rooters.

Mike came back, smiling bravely, but Manley knew that the poor fellow's heart felt as if it would break.

"Fairly beaten," whispered Manley, soberly to Kitty.

"The fault wasn't with McGuire, either. He ran the best race of his life."

Now there came a pause. There was to be an interval before the running of the half-mile.

Turning, Frank saw Louise Crozier standing a little way off, while behind her stood the young man who was acting as her escort.

Frank stepped quickly over to greet Miss Crozier, and to thank her again for the beautiful trophies presented in her name.

Now the half-milers came out.

Hal and Sato were to run for Woodstock, Hepnak and Bascomb for Bradford.

Frank hurried over to his chum.

"What's it to be, old fellow?"

"First medal for Woodstock, if I have to rupture my heart running," gritted Hal. "I wouldn't let Hepnak win anything here."

On a distance jog Sato could run all day, but in fast work for a short distance he was only about up to the better grade of Woodstock work. Plainly Woodstock's hopes in this run depended upon Hal.

But Manley could not wait to see the race. It was time for him to jog over to the locker house to get into his own racing togs.

But Frank heard the shot which told that the runners were off.

So consumed was he with anxiety that our hero found it difficult indeed to go on dressing.

But when he heard the yells that greeted the victor, Frank simply could not help stopping to listen.

He heard Hal's name called and cheered to the echo.

It was all right, then, so far. With the best of good fortune Woodstock could at least tie the record of the day's work.

As Frank, enveloped in his dressing-robe, stepped out into the corridor, he encountered Tod Owen, similarly attired.

"What's it to be?" grinned Tod.

"Victory!" retorted Manley.

"For whom?"

"I'll race you for the answer!" Frank challenged smilingly back over his shoulder.

CHAPTER IX.

FOR KITTY DUNSTAN'S SAKE!

John Dunstan had moved back many paces that he might enjoy a cigar.

Kitty stood alone until Clara Dodge stepped beside her.

"Enjoying the races?" asked Clara, sweetly.

"Immensely," replied Kitty, undaunted.

"That's strange."

"Why?"

"This is a Bradford day."

"So far," corrected Miss Dunstan.

"Oh, it'll be a clear Bradford day—nothing but the half-mile lost so far."

"That's it—so far," assented Kitty, smilingly.

"The medal for the five-mile is a very beautiful thing," went on Clara.

"Truly a handsome one."

"Tod has promised that I shall have it and wear it after to-day."

"Why, has the race been run?" queried Kitty, staring at her "friend" in pretended surprise.

"Just as good as run," replied Clara Dodge, with a toss of her head.

"Then how can Tod give the medal to you?" quizzed Kitty.

"He will—after the race."

"If he should chance to win it!"

"I suppose you wouldn't mind seeing me have such a handsome medal, though?" asked Clara, maliciously.

"Of course I should be delighted," retorted Miss Kitty, affably.

Meanwhile all Woodstock was on the anxious seat.

Should the five-mile go to Bradford, then that club would win the meet as well.

Could Manley be beaten?

But who had looked to see Jackets eclipsed by a Bradford man?

McGuire, too, was one of the junior quarter-milers of the county, yet in an evil moment, when running at his best, he had gone down before Bradford.

Hal had entered a saving wedge, but what if Manley should lose by even a yard or two?

Tod was a powerful and a swift athlete, and this surely had been a day of surprises.

Clara Dodge stepped away as she saw Manley, still in his dressing gown, approaching.

"Frank," whispered Kitty, nervously, "you simply must win this race."

"I know it," he smiled.

"But for other reasons beside the club honor," urged Kitty, wistfully.

"What other reasons?"

"Frank, dear, Tod has promised that, if he wins, Clara Dodge shall wear his medal," whispered Kitty, in a shocked voice.

"That would be terrible," smiled our hero.

"It would be fearfully annoying to me," quivered Miss Dunstan.

"Same thing, then!" clicked Frank, loyally.

"Will you promise me, Frank, that you'll win this medal?"

"My dear Kit, if you'll promise to keep and wear the medal as your own, I'll agree on my honor to win it for you!"

"But I couldn't say yes to that without papa's consent," she protested.

"Then we'll step right over at once and ask it," Manley proposed, bravely.

Kitty looked at him to see if he meant it, but Frank meant every word of it.

She stepped to his side, and together they presented themselves before Mr. Dunstan.

"Sir," began Frank, "Miss Kitty has her own reasons for wanting me to win first medal in this race. I've agreed on my honor to do it if she will consent to keep and wear the medal. Have you any objection to that, sir?"

Mr. Dunstan removed his cigar as he regarded our hero intently.

"Why should any such condition be necessary, Manley? Aren't you out to win?"

"Yes, sir, as always. But I feel that my chances will be wonderfully improved if you will very kindly consent to what I have asked."

Mr. Dunstan felt tempted to refuse. In fact, the refusal was trembling on his lips.

But just then he caught sight of Hek Owen.

That old ex-wrestler was looking at John Dunstan, and with an expression of anticipated triumph.

Mr. Dunstan gave himself a little twitch, then stood very rigidly erect.

"Manley," he said, "to-day I am tempted to accept almost any conditions rather than see Woodstock lose the meet. It won't be necessary for you to give Kitty the medal in public."

"Not at all, sir."

"Then I give my consent. But I do so only in the firm expectation that you will really win the race. If you fail, then—well, we can speak of that afterwards," finished John Dunstan, coldly.

That answer came like a shock of cold water.

It sounded as if Mr. Dunstan meant that, in the event of Frank's failure, he might discourage the young man from calling any more at his house.

Certainly that was the construction that Manley put on the reply.

Miss Kitty must have had a very similar idea, for, as they moved away, she whispered, almost tearfully:

"Frank, you will keep your promise, won't you?"

"If I fail," quivered Manley, "I shall be the most wretched fellow in the United States. But I shall not fail. Kit, dear, there's altogether too much at stake!"

She caught his swift look and understood. Then Manley jogged to the starting line.

Bob Everett was to run with him. Thorne, a rather new man in Bradford's running strength, was to travel with Tod.

"Make it a Bradford day, Tod!" howled the home rooters as the runners went to the line.

The din of encouragement grew.

Then, over it all, came the simple but effective Woodstock appeal:

"Manley! Manley!"

In that moment Kitty Dunstan felt so absolutely certain of her sweetheart that her eyes became moist with pride.

What was that? The crack of a pistol—the start. Kitty hurried over to the rail to see the men go by.

Tod had taken the lead. Frank allowed him to do so without contest. It was Manley's plan to use the first half or three-quarters in the work of warming himself up.

But Kitty didn't quite like the look of things. By the time that her knight had covered the first mile Tod Owen was almost an eighth of a mile in the lead.

Everett was running steadily about a sixteenth behind Frank, with Thorne somewhat behind.

At two miles Manley had gained but little. He was running fast and well, but Tod seemed tireless and unlimited in the matter of speed.

Now our hero began to try to close up.

He found it harder than he had expected.

For the first time an uneasy thrill shot through Manley.

What ailed him? Or rather, what new and wonderful force was there in Tod Owen?

Tod was, of course, of larger and more powerful build.

Yet, heretofore, Frank had been able to outdistance him.

Did it mean the arrival of a new champion? Frank wondered, with a thrill of agony.

On any other day it would not have been as bad. But to-day—with so much at stake!

Nevertheless, the young captain of the Woodstocks was not the one to submit tamely to defeat.

He would lose nothing through lack of confidence.

Intent on saving himself for the last mile, Manley tried only to "crawl" up.

Inch by inch he succeeded.

By the end of the third mile Manley had covered half the gap between himself and the Bradford leader.

Now, in the fourth mile, everything depended upon generalship.

If Manley put forth too great effort, he would only use himself up for the finish.

But if Tod succeeded in again materially increasing the lead, then the race was as good as his.

Old Hek stood at the rail, highly hopeful, yet not without dread.

As for Kitty, she watched and watched.

Even John Dunstan forgot to keep his cigar lighted.

Manley fought now, not only with speed, but with judgment.

He tried to make a slow but steady gain.

How tireless Tod's legs seemed!

At three and a half miles our hero had covered a bit more of the distance. Now he began to make stronger effort.

Yet at the finish of the fourth mile Tod Owen, still running as well as ever, led by nearly fifty yards.

"It's all Tod's this time!" went up the encouraging cry from home rooters.

While Hek leaned out over the rail to call:

"Keep ahead, lad, but save some of your wind for the finish."

Frank let himself out in desperate earnest. He must win—he had given his word. He would come in first though his heart felt snapping under its strain!

And now Woodstock began to cheer in full earnest. There was some hope at last.

For at the end of four miles and a half Tod Owen led by only about fifteen yards.

Was it fifteen?

In truth, the spectators rubbed their eyes, for, now that the last half-mile had been entered upon, Manley did not seem to stay in anything like a relative position.

Just as they were entering the last quarter of the five miles Manley managed to forge by to a lead of a few feet.

"Tod! Tod! Move!"

Bradford's captain, with victory almost in his grasp, was exerting himself as he had never done before.

Both runners now, with all caution thrown to the winds, were dashing ahead at the best that there was in them.

Yet Manley's last, fast spurt was carrying him steadily away from his rival.

Kitty's pulses danced as she waited feverishly at the finish-line.

But the crowd ceased to palpitate in the last bit of stretch. It was now looked upon as decided.

As Manley came down the track in that last effort his legs flew so that, to the onlookers, they seemed blended together.

He was over the line—the leader!

Yet so fierce was the pace that Kitty hardly saw him go by when Tod took her hero's place in her vision.

A clean winning, by at least twenty yards.

"Manley! Manley!"

Frank was breathing hard as he stopped and left the track. Hal, Joe and Sato caught him up, bearing him away, while other fellows did the same for Everett, who finished not a very good third.

After that fearful pace it was five minutes ere Manley felt as if he could breathe again—ten before he felt like moving about at all.

But now the crowd was thronging before the locker house, whither Miss Crozier had come to present the trophies.

To the winners in the various events Miss Crozier presented the gold and silver medals, pinning them to their new owners' breasts, and each with an appropriate speech.

To Jackets it was a fearful ordeal to step forward and receive only the silver medal in the sprinting class.

Then and there the little fellow resolved that hereafter he would devote more time to his running.

When it came to the last pair of medals, Miss Crozier stepped back, smilingly, handing one little morocco case to Kitty Dunstan.

A cheer of delight went up.

"To Frank Manley," said Kitty, bravely, before that yelling crowd, "a champion rarely beaten and with a record not yet approached in junior athletics, it is a great joy to present the first prize, a gold medal, in recognition of a splendid running of the five-mile race."

Racket reigned as Kitty pinned the medal to Frank's breast.

"I won it for your sake, you know," he found chance to whisper.

Her soft-spoken answer made his pulses bound again.

"For both our sakes, my dear!"

Both these little speeches were heard, as they should have been heard, only by the utterers themselves.

Miss Crozier resumed her place as Tod stepped forward.

Clara Dodge looked on only covertly as her companion received the decoration of the silver medal.

Then the beautiful vase was brought out.

In a rather lengthy speech Louise Crozier presented this crowning trophy to the Woodstock Junior Athletic Club.

On behalf of the club Frank accepted in a neat little speech that brought cheers.

"Anyway," whispered Hek to his disappointed son, "Bradford won half the events to-day. We won't have to wait long for better luck."

CHAPTER X.

STOLEN—TWO SHADOWS!

"Manley here?"

"Right here!"

A boy from Woodstock, riding at a gallop, had turned in at the training grounds.

Now, as our hero stepped forward, the boy rode up at a trot, bent over and handed our hero a yellow envelope.

"Why, that's Jackets' pony!"

"And the boy brought a telegram!"

In an instant speculation was rife.

For the whole thing had a mysterious look, this bringing of a telegram at a gallop and the use of Winston's little saddle pet.

But those who looked at Manley's face for a hint of explanation were disappointed.

Our hero slowly read the despatch without a change of countenance.

Then he stepped up to Kitty Dunstan's side as if nothing of consequence were on his mind.

"Are you going to offer me a ride to Woodstock?" he asked.

The raising of his eyebrows, slight as it was, told her that he had an unusual reason for making the request.

"We shall be very glad to have you go with us," she quickly answered.

"Then I shall make haste with my dressing."

A few minutes later he came out, to find Mr. Dunstan and Grace on the rear seat. Kitty was waiting for him on the front seat. Hal had already climbed the box and sat beside the driver.

"You have had some news?" asked John Dunstan, quickly, as the carriage rolled away.

"Yes, sir."

"Important?"

"So important," quivered Manley, "that I asked Miss

Kitty to invite me to ride with you. So important that, as soon as we have gotten away from the curious crowd, I will ask you to instruct your driver to go as fast as he can."

"It is news concerning the rascals who, for some reason, have made themselves my daughter's enemies?"

"Just that, sir," uttered Manley. "And this telegram, sir, will tell you all that I know so far. I will read it to you:

"'Bigger thing, even, than you thought. Shall arrive on train due at 5.12. Have officers at depot to arrest men I will point out. STURGESS.'"

"It's all Greek to me," declared Mr. Dunstan. "Who is Sturgess?"

"Why, surely, sir, you must remember that young man from New York, a reporter who was here once before."

"Now I do."

"Well, I wired him yesterday afternoon."

"You are going to make a newspaper sensation of this affair, which brings in my daughter's name?" demanded Mr. Dunstan, looking greatly annoyed.

"I hope that won't be necessary, sir; but it was vital to us to know the name of the person to whom that letter from Southey was addressed."

"What has that to do with this reporter fellow?"

"I wired and asked him to find out."

"To whom the letter was addressed?"

"Certainly."

"But how could he find out?"

"That is something that Mr. Sturgess will have to tell you for himself."

"His telegram doesn't say that he did find out."

"To me the despatch reads as if he had learned," rejoined Frank. "Otherwise he wouldn't know anything about the rest of the affair."

"But I am unable to understand a reporter's ability to get information that a detective can't."

"Well, sir, there are detectives and detectives—some of them first-class, wonderful men, and the others poor sticks. But a reporter has to be capable in order to hold his position on a big daily."

"Still, to get information that it is practically illegal to give?" persisted John Dunstan.

"Why, my dear sir, did you never read what took place in a secret session of the United States Senate?"

"Of course."

"It is supposed to be against all rules to give information of what takes place in executive session. Yet reporters have ways of always finding out."

"Wonderful fellows, then, these reporters!"

"Their position and influence make them seem wonderful. But the world, Mr. Dunstan, is full of people who want favors from newspaper men. For that reason a reporter always knows someone who can help him in return for help. Why, if the great governments can't keep their secrets from the newspaper men, who else can?"

"Then you feel sure that Sturgess has found out——"

"On the clue that I gave him he has learned something of great importance. You will note that he goes so far as to ask that we have police at the depot to arrest certain persons."

Mr. Dunstan leaned out to call instructions to his man on the box to drive at all speed.

"I'm all curiosity to know what the outcome will be," confessed Kitty.

"I'm more concerned, young lady, with knowing that anyone who wishes to do you harm is out of the way," retorted her father.

As there was nothing more to be said on this most important matter of all, Manley managed to divert the talk into other channels.

"Poor little Jackets," muttered our hero. "He feels badly cut up to-day. It is no use to point out to him that Distleigh is an older, bigger and stronger fellow. Jackets didn't believe that he ever could lose a sprint. But I was equally surprised at McGuire's losing. It wasn't his fault, though. He did nobly."

"And Bradford captured an even half of to-day's events," suggested Grace, musingly.

"That club is coming up to Hek's expectations," smiled Manley, seriously. "He believes that Bradford will soon pass on and leave us behind. Well, certainly Hek knows a heap about training, and he is watching everything that Tod's club does nowadays."

"Do you believe it possible that Bradford will soon surpass Woodstock?" asked Kitty, looking really alarmed.

Frank shrugged his shoulders.

"Who can tell?" he retorted.

"But if they should?"

"It would show a great need of hard work on the part of Woodstock to get the lead back again."

"But surely you don't believe this thing can happen?" asked Kitty, almost tearfully.

"It isn't at all unlikely," rejoined our hero. "Remember that the Bradfords average just a shade older than we do, and that they are now training just as hard and as faithfully."

"If Bradford does get the lead," declared Miss Dunstan, "I am afraid I shall want to see you disband your club."

"Wouldn't that look a good deal like running away from before a superior enemy?" smiled Frank.

"Of course it would," broke in Mr. Dunstan, decisively, and Kit sat back, almost abashed.

The Dunstan carriage reached Woodstock with nearly twenty minutes to spare.

"May we drive to the gym, and there wait for news?" suggested Mr. Dunstan.

"Certainly, sir; but I would suggest that you send your carriage away and telephone for it when you want it again. The carriage standing outside the gym might make someone curious whose interest we don't care to excite as yet."

So when the carriage had been sent away Manley pointed to the door of the board room, while he himself rushed to the telephone.

After two minutes at the instrument all had been arranged with Mr. Griscomb, chief of police.

"Are we going to the station?" asked Hal.

"Yes," nodded his chum.

"And I?" queried John Dunstan.

"It might attract more notice, sir. Wouldn't it be just as well for you to remain here?"

The two youngsters were about to hurry away when the telephone bell rang.

The man at the other end of the wire proved to be the Barbersville constable, who, since the arrival of the detectives, had been hired to remain near or in the hotel, that he might be handy in case an arrest became necessary.

"That you, Manley?" demanded the constable, excitedly.

"Yes."

"I've been trying for you every five minutes since a little after one o'clock!"

"Anything wrong?"

"Wrong? Well, say!"

"Hurry up, then. What is it?"

"Well, about noon Southey and Briggs went strolling away. Powell went after 'em, keeping in the background all he could. Understand?"

"Shadowing the pair?"

"Yes. Well, in 'bout three-quarters of an hour back comes the pair, but no Powell. Clayton was a good deal surprised. Bimeby off goes the pair again. Clayton makes up his mind to know what's what, and off he goes after 'em. Hour later—say, what d'ye think?"

"I'd rather you told me," retorted Frank.

"Southey and Briggs came back."

"And Powell or Clayton?"

"Nary one. And I hain't seen 'em since."

"Where are Southey and Briggs?"

"Went away about half-past three."

"Have they come back yet?"

"Not a single 'come.' Say, how does it look to you?"

"The same that it probably does to you," Frank half-laughed.

"But you see," explained the constable, "I had my strict orders to stay right around here. I was not to go away, and I was not to make any arrest, without orders. So what was I to do?"

"I guess you did the only thing you could," admitted Manley. "But if you see either of the pair again it might be just as well not to hold back on an arrest."

"You bet I won't."

"So that all you can do for the present is to stay where you are and to watch."

"I'll do it."

"But say!"

"Well, Manley?"

"Which way did Southey and Briggs go?"

"I've heard from others that they took the road over to Woodstock."

"Oh, in that case, many thanks. We'll keep a lookout here."

As our hero hung up the receiver, Mr. Dunstan demanded, eagerly:

"What was the word?"

"Nothing much," smiled Manley. "Except that your detectives have been shanghaied, and Southey and Briggs have turned themselves loose."

Then, before Mr. Dunstan could ask any more questions, our hero quickly recounted the news.

"The stupids!" growled Mr. Dunstan.

"The next time you want detectives, sir, it will pay you to engage real ones; not any old fellow from some small agency."

"And now?"

"The depot, sir—in a hurry. Come on, Hal!"

But they reached the station platform with five minutes to spare, and the train was fourteen minutes behind schedule time.

CHAPTER XI.

STURGESS SUPPLIES THE SCENT.

As they waited on the platform, Frank and Hal heard the shouts of the Up and At 'Em Boys, who were returning in three busses.

"We might be able to use a few of those noisy youngsters," suggested Manley, suddenly.

"There are nearly three dozen of 'em on tap," grinned Hal.

"Old fellow, take a quick run to the gym and pick out seven or eight of the best. Bring them up here quickly, but tell 'em to come singly."

"The rest will follow to see what's up."

"Give the rest strict orders, then, to remain in the gym until they are sent for."

Hal was off like a projectile of flesh and bone.

Manley went inside to a seat near a window that commanded a view of the approach to the platform.

But the first ones to heave in sight were Hal's own levies of club members.

There were Joe and Sato; Everett and McGuire, Humphrey, Larabee, Prentiss and Cranston.

"A great fighting bunch, if one is needed," muttered Frank.

They came along, one at a time, and stood by on the platform.

Manley remained where he was until it occurred to him to wonder where Griscomb and the policeman were.

"But that's the chief's own business," concluded our hero. "He'll appear when he's needed."

More minutes dragged by. At length the whistle of the New York train was heard.

Manley stepped out on the platform.

He was aware that his fellow members were eyeing him covertly, but to them he paid no heed beyond a nod to Joe and Sato.

Still no sign of the police.

"Oh, well, if they're late, we'll hardly need 'em," smiled Frank to himself. "Look at this bunch of Up and At 'Em Boys!"

The train was coming in now.

The youngsters bunched more closely, though they kept away from their young captain.

Only Hal was beside our hero.

There he was—Sturgess!

The reporter, bounding lightly down, was the first passenger from the train.

There were but three others—rough, evil-looking men, all of them past thirty.

While the trio were not attired as tramps would be, yet they were far from spruce-looking.

Yet in the faces of all three there was a common expression of sullenness.

Their eyes were of the "cold" type.

Hal, who was eyeing them rather closely, put them down as men who would feel little compunction over killing.

"Those are the men," said Reporter Sturgess, in an undertone, as his hand met Manley's in warm clasp. "That tall one was the chap who got the letter."

"What's their speciality?" demanded Frank.

"Gun-play!" replied the reporter, with emphasis. "Hold-up men—any form of crime that can be carried on pistol in hand."

"The police haven't——"

But at that instant the door of the baggage room opened, and Griscomb and three policemen came out.

The three men had walked on for a few steps, but now they had turned to look.

Instantly their gaze rested on the policeman, while Griscomb looked at our hero.

"Gun-play men," whispered Frank. "Dangerous characters."

Griscomb's hand travelled swiftly to his hip-pocket, a hint that was followed by his subordinates.

But at the first inkling the three suspects turned into fugitives.

Revolvers appeared in their hands like lightning.

In the same second they started to run.

Nor did they keep together; each took a different course.

"Joe and Sato, catch that fellow! Hal, get that one!"

Manley pointed to the fugitives whom he wanted pursued.

Then he himself started on a swift run down the station platform after the tallest of the trio.

The other youngsters chased each his own choice, while the policemen, heavier, and unused to swift running, fell lumberingly in as a sort of rear-guard in this novel chase.

How Manley's fellow could run!

He darted around in front of the engine and crossed the track.

Frank followed, but the train was under headway and gaining in speed.

Halting impatiently, our hero turned and raced down to the rear of the train.

He was just in time to see his quarry disappearing over a nine-foot board fence.

With a good start on the other side of the fence the rascal would have a fair chance for the back-yards of the little village of factory boarding-houses.

Nearly all of these houses were reputable, but there were a few shady saloons and other places in which a fugitive with money might be helped to hide or escape.

But Manley made for that fence at a steam-engine sprint.

As he got near he made a running high jump, landing a-top of the fence.

His quarry was halfway across the field beyond.

But Manley, on top of the fences, lost not a fraction of a second there.

As soon as he had landed he leaped down into the field.

The instant that his feet touched the earth he was sprinting again.

Plump up against the fence went the fugitive.

Then he looked back over his shoulder and saw Manley heading for him.

There was no time for a man not up in athletics to get over that fence.

Besides, the fugitive understood that his pursuer was a master-hand at fence-jumping!

"Stand back!" came the snarling order, and Manley found himself looking into the ugly muzzle of a revolver a dozen feet away.

"I'll drill ye, if ye don't turn tail and scoot!" came the cool information.

Nor did Manley doubt that the rascal meant what he said.

But Manley, not pausing in his run, threw his feet forward, flopped and fell on his side.

"Guess you won't do much harm that way," grinned the gun-play man, coldly. "Here, get back there or I'll shoot!"

This latter threat was directed at Jim Larabee and Si Prentiss, who had just gained the top of the high fence.

Too late the fugitive saw Manley "hunch" himself forward along the ground.

Swiftly the muzzle was depressed to cover our hero.

But even this was too late.

For Manley was on his left side now, his left foot caught behind the gun-play man's right ankle.

Manley's right foot landed and pressed against the fellow's right knee.

With a strong shove against the knee, and a strong "hook" forward at the fellow's ankle, Manley caused his man to topple, lose his balance and fall over backward.

Plunk! The falling scoundrel's head hit the board fence behind him with a dazing force that caused the wood to creak and yield.

By the time that the victim of this novel jiu-jitsu attack was going backward Manley was sitting up.

A quick spring and our hero was a-top of his man.

He could have handled him alone, now that he was down, and the pistol had fallen a dozen feet away.

But Prentiss and Larabee were at hand, leaping upon the stranger and pinning him flat.

Whip! Out came Manley's cord.

A shot sounded in the distance just then.

With the precision of an old hand at the game, Frank tied his prisoner in the most approved Jap fashion.

Jim had picked up the pistol, an ugly-looking "bulldog" of 44-calibre.

"Well, maybe ye've got me," snarled the discomfited prisoner. "But ye've got worse people to deal with."

"Who? Southey?" demanded our hero, cheerily. "Oh, we'll fix him, too, I guess!"

"Southey?" demanded the fellow.

"Oh, I forgot. Well, the fellow who sent you the letter. He's your boss, isn't he?"

The prisoner snarled sullenly, like an angry dog.

"Oh, you don't have to tell me, of course," assented Frank, readily. "But I guess you see that your gang's scheme is pretty open to folks here."

"Ye can't make me talk!" leered the fellow, lying on the ground and glaring up at his captors.

"Oh, you don't need to talk," Frank assured him. "You can be just about hung without opening your mouth."

"Hung? I never killed anybody!" snarled the wretch, his face showing white for an instant.

Manley guessed that he had unexpectedly driven home.

So he looked coolly at the wretch as he replied:

"My friend, you will do well to save that sort of talk for a jury. You'll face one soon enough."

Yet this had the very reverse effect of making the wretch talk.

Plainly he thought the advice to save his talk was good, for his lips closed tightly.

"You might as well be helped up so you can walk," hinted Manley.

Jim and Si pulled the rascal to his feet, only to be met with the defiance:

"Mebbe ye can put me on my feet, but mebbe ye can't make me walk!"

"And mebbe we can," smiled Frank.

With the fingers of his right hand he dug in just behind the "funnybone" of the fellow's left arm.

A queer expression of agony shot into the prisoner's face.

"Now you'll walk, won't you?" laughed Frank, putting on the pressure a little harder.

"Of course he will," jeered Jim Larabee, as the quartette moved toward a gate further down the field.

They passed out through the boarding-house village, a crowd rapidly gathering and following.

There was already a great crowd at the railway station.

Joe and Sato were there with their particular fugitive, whom they had caught without much trouble, and whom they had subdued before the fellow realized that it was time to use his weapon.

Hal and McGuire were next to appear with the third fugitive.

A blood-stained handkerchief was wrapped around Spoford's left wrist.

And the crowd of curious ones was pouring in, hundreds strong.

"What's happened? What have they been doing?"

Questions poured in upon the police and the Up and At 'Em Boys.

But Manley's first move was to race over to his chum.

"What's happened, old fellow?" demanded Frank, anxiously.

"Fellow shot at me," responded Hal, laconically.

"And hit you!" uttered Frank.

"Oh, you might as well call it a miss," laughed Hal, unwinding the handkerchief to display his hurt.

It was only a deep graze of the skin, but blood was flowing freely.

"To the drug store for you!" uttered Manley. "See that it's well washed and bandaged."

Making a wry face, Hal turned and walked away. He regarded the trifling wound as beneath notice, but he was accustomed to minding Manley.

Through the crowd the police forced their prisoners. At the station-house it was found that each of the trio was provided with two revolvers, an abundance of ammunition and a knife.

"You rascals came prepared to fight," observed Chief Griscomb, grimly.

But the prisoners could not be induced to talk. Sullen and utterly uncommunicative, they were locked up to await developments.

Chief Griscomb, Manley and Reporter Sturgess then held a consultation in the chief's office.

Reporter Sturgess, who had had a busy all-night and forenoon, could tell nothing that threw further light on the matter.

"There's another fellow on the paper who knew the mail clerk on that run," supplied the reporter. "He undertook to get for me the address on the envelope handed in by Southey. The peculiar manner of mailing the letter aroused the clerk's interest and suspicion. So he remembered the address.

"The rest was easy. Assisted by my fellow reporter, we ran down the fellow—our tall men here—to whom the letter was addressed. He got it this morning, and of course we watched him. In the meantime, however, we had found out something about him. He has done time twice for shooting scrapes, and is regarded as a bad all-around fellow.

"My fellow reporter shadowed him, saw him get his two pals and then head for the depot. I kept wholly in the background, but took up the chase at the train, my fellow reporter wiring Manley in my name after the train had started."

"And here we seem bound to stop," observed the chief. "We can't make these rogues talk, and until we do, or catch Southey and Briggs, we appear to be stumped."

Frank again telephoned the constable at Barberville, only

to ascertain that neither Southey nor Briggs had been seen again.

"They went back to the hotel that last time and then away again, only to make sure that they had bagged the last of their shadowers," suggested Manley.

"But what has happened to those detective chaps?" asked Griscomb, anxiously. "It will be serious business if they have been lured to some out-of-the-way place and done to death."

"There's one last chance to solve this whole mystery," announced Manley, suddenly.

"I shall be pleased beyond words if you can point it out," uttered the chief.

"That I can't do until I've tried the plan," negatived Manley, rising and walking slowly about the room. "But I'm going to start now to see what there is in my plan."

"Am I to go with you?" asked Sturgess, eagerly.

"No," replied Frank, quickly. "But if anything comes of my idea, I'll see that you get in quickly on the news end."

"I'll trust you for that," smiled Sturgess.

"And now, Mr. Sturgess, as you've had mighty little sleep in more than twenty-four hours, I suggest that you go to the hotel, lie down on a bed and sleep until I send for you. Don't be afraid. I won't see you left out in the cold. You've helped me too much for that."

Hal was waiting outside when Frank came out of the private office.

"Come along, Hal," whispered Frank. "The rest is up to a girl."

"A girl?"

"I believe that Kit Dunstan is the only one on earth who can find the answer for us now."

If Hal was puzzled, his astonishment was mild as compared with that of John Dunstan when, in the board room at the gym, he heard the same opinion from Manley's lips.

"My daughter solve this riddle?" cried Mr. Dunstan.

"If Miss Kitty can't, then I believe it never will be solved!" was Manley's decisive answer.

CHAPTER XII.

KITTY DUNSTAN AS A WINNER.

Frank whispered his plan to Mr. Dunstan, who, from astonishment, soon passed to a state of comprehension.

"It may work," he admitted.

"May we try it, sir?"

"Yes; I think we had better—for Kitty's sake. It means her safety."

Mr. Dunstan thereupon 'phoned for his carriage and for another to take Hal and Grace to his home.

For Hal was in no condition, with his bandaged wrist, to take part in any rough and tumble that the night's work might bring.

Joe, therefore, was chosen to ride inside the carriage, while Sato climbed to a seat on the box.

Again the Dunstan horses started for Bradford.

On the way our hero outlined to his sweetheart the work that she was expected to take up in this puzzling case.

At Bradford Kitty alighted at one of the stores. With Frank's advice she ordered a basket of oranges and other dainties, which Frank carried from the store.

Then they drove to the hospital, where they asked to see the patient Roughsedge, the same whose shin Miss Dunstan had broken in self-defence.

Only Frank and his sweetheart entered the ward, the others remaining outside.

Roughsedge was awake, and as comfortable as a man can be who is confined to his bed with a broken leg.

"Good evening," Kitty greeted him, prettily, as she stood beside his cot.

She presented a picture of fresh young beauty and wholesome girlhood that would have moved any but a blind man.

Her cool hand rested on Roughsedge's forehead. Then she gently took one of his wrists, feeling at the pulse.

"Say," blurted the patient, "I wish you was one of the nurses here."

"Why, you haven't much need for a nurse," cried Kitty, in her sprightly way.

"Well, it'd do a feller good, I reckon, to have you to look at."

"That's a new idea in nursing," laughed Kitty, sweetly. "But, while you don't need a nurse, you do need things to eat—good things, too. How will these suit you?"

While Frank held the basket, Miss Dunstan deftly arranged the delicacies on the little table beside the cot.

Roughsedge viewed the dainties, but he looked a good deal more at smiling Kit herself.

"You're a great girl!" he cried, admiringly.

"Think so, eh?" asked Frank, also smiling.

"I wish there was more like her in the world!" exclaimed Roughsedge.

"It would be a shame to have anything to happen to her, wouldn't it?" smiled Frank.

"How do you mean?" asked Roughsedge, curiously.

"Why, suppose someone were to harm her?"

"Say, I'd kill the feller that tried it!" cried the patient, too vehemently to be doubted.

Kitty looked at Frank. He placed a chair for her close to the head of the cot, then himself stood in the background.

"Someone is trying to hurt me now," said Kitty, gently.

"Who?" demanded Roughsedge, with a scowl.

"Oh, I guess you know the people, for you're supposed to be in their employ. I mean the pair who are known as Southey and Briggs."

"They're trying to hurt ye?" demanded the fellow, in a voice of amazement.

"They are trying very hard."

"Why?"

"I think, Roughsedge, that you can tell me even that," persisted Kitty.

"Yes, I guess I can," mumbled the fellow, at last and speaking reluctantly.

"Then won't you tell me, that I may be on my guard?"

Roughsedge thought for some moments before he asked, cautiously:

"What they doing to ye?"

"Well, the last time I was here to see you Briggs ran off with my ponies. Drove the poor things almost to death. We found out that he did it to spite me. They are trying to do other things. I seem to be in great danger. Surely you can tell me why they hate me."

"Yes, I can," admitted Roughsedge, slowly. "They've got a grudge against ye because ye put me where I am now."

"Why should that make them hate me?"

"Because it has laid me up for weeks, and they couldn't carry out their game without me."

"What is their game, as you call it?" asked Miss Dunstan, very quietly.

"Oh, now, miss, that's more than I can tell ye."

Manley thought it time to take a hand.

"Roughsedge," suggested our hero, "will it help you out any if I tell you that Southey's three gun-play men are now prisoners at Woodstock, and that the police are hot after Southey and Briggs? Then, with you, the police would have the whole crowd. Now, if you can help us out in any way, I can promise you that things will go easier with you. Things have gone so far that you can't save any one but yourself, and that only by being willing to tell us a few things."

"Now, you'll help us, won't you?" pleaded Kitty, placing one of her cool hands over one of the patient's.

It required a good deal of coaxing, but Kit knew well how to coax.

"Well, since it can't do much harm, I will tell you, miss. There wasn't no scheme against ye in the first place. But you put me out of business and spoiled Southey's plan, or at least hindered it a good deal. So he wanted to get square with you. That's the way I figure it, but I hain't seen nor heard from none of the gang since I came here."

"And just what was Southey here to do?" asked Kit, persuasively.

"He was here to rob the bank in Woodstock. With tax money and them things there's a heap of cash in the bank just now. Southey figgered on getting away with at least a quarter of a million." Southey, miss, don't use dynamite to open a bank safe. He's what they call a combination man. Give him an hour before a vault door and he'll most always figger out the combination and throw the door open.

"Now that, miss, was where I came in. I've done a heap of—I mean, I was to start fires in houses in two or three parts of the town—lay the fires with fuses, ye understand, so they wouldn't be discovered right away. Then the police department and the police would be busy. The town would all flock over there. The business streets would be about deserted to-night, which was the time that the job was planned for."

"Briggs is a jimmy man. While the excitement was on he would open a way into the bank. Then Southey would get busy with the combination. He would have an office coat on and a pen behind his ear, and he'd plan to make up to look like one of the bank people, so that if anyone looked in from the street they'd think some bank officer was working late. Oh, he's played that trick in other places.

"Then the gun-play men would be in hiding right at hand. If any trouble started they'd chip in with their pistols and make things lively for butters-in. All hands'd get away in the excitement. It'd be the same if they got the bank's funds—the gun-play men would do what ye'd call cover the retreat."

"Then Southey must have places of hiding around here?" hinted Kitty.

Roughsedge hesitated. But lying flat on one's back in a hospital sets one to thinking a good deal. Roughsedge was beginning to be sick of his long criminal life. And Kitty was very pretty, and her eyes very coaxing.

"Oh, they've got hiding-places, and right where nobody'd think of looking for 'em," admitted Roughsedge.

"And now, for my own safety, you're going to tell me where those hiding-places are? Your wicked employers will be found, anyway; but it'll be so much nicer for you to tell me where they hide, so that I may pay them back for the harm they're trying to do to me."

The man's eyes gleamed savagely again as Kitty spoke of harm to herself.

"They've rented an office right over the post office here in Bradford," he whispered, eagerly. "And the other place is a shanty deep in the woods, about three-quarters of a mile outside of Barberville."

He described the location of the shanty with great particularity.

Now, at a sign from Manley, Kitty changed the subject of conversation, while Frank hurried out.

"Why did you try to hold me up?" asked Kitty.

"Because I wanted the money for drink," admitted Roughsedge.

With Joe and Sato, Frank quickly presented himself at the Bradford police station.

A quick raid was carried through. In a room upstairs over the post office, a room fitted up with cots, a stove and food supplies to last for a fortnight, Southey and Briggs were caught in their shirt-sleeves.

They made no resistance, but were far from being frightened.

"Do you feel like telling what you did with the detectives who were shadowing you?" asked Manley.

"Not a word," came Southey's retort.

"No harm done by asking," rejoined Manley, drily. "By this time they're probably found, anyway."

Within fifteen minutes word did come from Barberville to the effect that Clayton and Powell had been found, tied and gagged, but unharmed, in the shanty described by Roughsedge.

It need be stated in passing only that the gang was wanted elsewhere for bank robberies.

Roughsedge had been so steeped in crime that it was beyond Kitty Dunstan's power to save her victim when he was able to be moved.

Yet she did persuade her father to hire counsel for the fellow, with the result that Roughsedge's willingness to talk was argued in his favor, and he escaped with a sentence much lighter than would otherwise have been the case.

By great care Kit's half-foundered ponies were pulled through, and were at last fit for driving again, to the great joy of their sweet young owner.

Reporter Sturgess got a newspaper story that well repaid him for his trouble. At Frank's request he did not even mention Kitty's name in his newspaper account, referring to her only in an impersonal way, to the great delight of her father, who did not care to see his daughter figuring in sensational news despatches.

Relieved of his terrible anxiety for his daughter's safety, Mr. Dunstan proposed a plan for that evening that just suited the youngsters.

That was that Frank and Hal should sup with the girls and himself in the stately old house on the hill.

Before they went in to that supper Manley caught his sweetheart alone for an instant.

Out of his pocket he drew a morocco case, from which he took the Crozier gold medal for the five-mile run.

"You know, dear," he whispered, "I won this for your sake, and on condition that you wear it. You pinned it to my breast in public. I pin it to yours now in private."

Was the indistinct sound that followed a kiss—or two?

THE END.

The sharp, swift song that steel runners make as they skim over the ice! Is there a boy in skating latitudes who doesn't love that music? Manley's boys had longed and hungered for it for weeks. It came at last. "FRANK MANLEY'S PRIZE SKATING SQUAD; Or, Keen, Real Life on the Ice," will be published complete in No. 15 of Frank Manley's Weekly, out next week. It's a wonder-story of life on the ice.

SPECIAL NOTICE: All back numbers of this weekly are always in print. If you cannot obtain them from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 24 UNION SQUARE, NEW YORK, and you will receive the copies you order by return mail.

PRACTICAL TALKS ON TRAINING

By "Physical Director"

No. 46.

Before me on my desk lie two letters that call for comment.

They are both from readers—one a boy, and the other a girl.

The boy weighs about one hundred and thirty pounds. He has one inch of chest expansion.

Incidentally, he states that he has never gone in for training, but now intends to begin.

It is high time that he does!

Now for the girl reader. She is fifteen years old, weighs one hundred and twenty pounds, and goes in for all sorts of outdoor games.

She even plays some that are supposed to belong exclusively to boys and men.

She can show four inches of chest expansion!

What a great difference between a boy and a girl of nearly the same ages and not differing much in weight!

The girl of fifteen who, in this age, can show a chest expansion of four inches is little short of a physical wonder.

With any sort of care, and a continuance of her outdoor life, she has a long and glowingly healthy life before her—a life full of possibilities for that happiness which only health can bring.

The boy quoted above is little more than a physical wreck.

Within the last few years the average of health and strength among our girls has improved wonderfully.

It is a pity that not as much can be said for the boys, but the truth is that, except in our colleges and in some schools, the boys have only just begun to wake up to the value of physical training life.

Even now, at the rate things are going, it will require only about ten years more for the girls to pass the boys in strength; and then our trousered youngsters will be obliged to take back seats and allow themselves to be called "the weaker sex."

Girls are more out of doors than ever before. They have but one great enemy now to overcome—that timidity natural with their sex to indulge in some forms of athletic sports.

But more and more girls are learning to play and romp and tramp outdoors. That is why they are improving at present faster than the boys are.

Boys, isn't it time to wake up in earnest, and to give a part of your time every day to the outdoor, physical training life?

Now, as to chest expansion:

Many a boy who writes me states his measurements and then asks: "Have I the build of an athlete?"

Do you know the point in the measurements that I study first of all? It's the chest expansion. If the correspondent shows but a poor chest expansion, then I am obliged to tell him that he hasn't yet the build of an athlete.

There can be no such being as an athlete with a weak chest!

Vice versa, every real athlete shows fine chest expansion.

What is the value of chest expansion? I will tell you.

You know, of course, from your study of physiology at school that some of the tissue in the body is always dying and being replaced by new tissue. Now, the old dead matter has to be driven out of the body, or you would be poisoned and die. Much of this cast-off, dead tissue—impurity—passes off from the lungs in the form of gases.

You take a deep, full breath of fresh air into your lungs, and it comes out again tainted, charged heavily with the impurities of the body.

Suppose you do not breathe in very pure air at the outset. Then that breath, when it leaves the lungs, is able to take up less of the impure matter that has reached the lungs. Thus, the continued breathing of bad air makes it impossible to rid the body of impurities that therefore must remain inside and poison the body.

Hence it is of the utmost importance to breathe in the purest air to be had, that the impurities in the body may be more quickly cast out.

Chest expansion is of the most wonderful importance because the larger the chest the more fresh air it will take in at each breath.

At this time of the year I am afraid that many of my readers sin against their health and strength by sleeping in bedrooms with closed windows. If you do this you can't breathe enough pure air through the night to carry away the body's impurities through the lungs. As a consequence you slowly rot inside. No matter how much you may dislike this statement about slowly rotting inside, it is true in the case of everyone who sleeps in a closed room.

But "shall a fellow sleep with his window open when he has a cold?" asks one timid correspondent. Why not? Fresh air is the best cure for a cold that can be had. Pure outdoor air never caused a cold yet. Impure air, rotting the lungs, is bound to cause colds.

Never sleep, exercise or live in a room where all ventilation is prevented! I work in my study with one of my windows open a little when it is below zero outdoors—and I haven't had a cold in a long time. In earlier years, before I understood the value of chest expansion and fresh outdoor air, I was a chronic victim of colds!

Every form of exercise and game that makes you breathe heavily provides for chest expansion and builds up your whole body.

That is why baseball, football, rowing, swimming, skating, wrestling and quick gymnastic drills make the athlete.

You can get chest expansion in only one way—by working for it in pure outdoor air!

Letters from Readers

NOTICE.—Write letters for this page on only one side of the paper. Number your questions. Do not ask questions on the same paper containing mail orders. Immediate answers cannot be given, as "Frank Manley's Weekly" is printed several weeks ahead of the date of issue. Address all questions for this department to "Physical Director," No. 24 Union Square, New York.

Sept. 1, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I would like advice on the following subjects: (1) How are my measurements: Neck, 14½ inches; shoulders, 17 inches; chest, deflated, 30 inches, normal 33½ inches, expanded 36 inches; upper arm, 12 inches; forearm, 10½ inches; waist, 26 inches; hips, 34 inches; thigh, 20 inches; calf, 13 inches; height, 5 feet 2½ inches; age, 17 years; weight, 115 pounds. (2) Am I well built? (3) What are my weak points? My ambition in athletics is to be a weight-lifter, wrestler, boxer, exponent of jiu-jitsu, a tumbler and a contortionist combined. (4) Can this be done? (5) If so, how? (6) Where can I get books on the following subjects: Weight-lifting, contortionism, dumbbells, tumbling? My book dealer cannot furnish them. (7) How can I reduce the back of my hips, which are very fleshy?

Yours truly,

E. W. T.

(1) About fifteen pounds above average weight at your age and height. (2) Rather on the powerful order. (3) Your ambitions are rather mixed. Jiu-jitsu and contortion work, for instance, are well combined, but weight-lifting does not harmonize with either. With your build you can easily develop into a weight-lifter, but you will lose correspondingly in the other sports. If you ever go far in jiu-jitsu you will not care much about boxing or wrestling. (4 and 5) Answered. (6) Here are three of the Frank Tousey Ten-cent Handbooks that will be of great service to you: No. 6, "How to Become an Athlete"; No. 10, "How to Box"; No. 25, "How to Become a Gymnast." (7) Running and jumping furnish the best means.

Sept. 1, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

As I have not seen any letters from Canada, and being an ardent reader of your king of weeklies, I thought I would write you a letter. I hope you will answer these questions. (1) How are my measurements? Chest, normal 31 inches, expanded 34 inches; neck, 13 inches; biceps, 11 inches; wrist, 6¼ inches; ankle, 8½ inches; calf, 11¼ inches; waist, 26 inches; age, 16 years 9 months; weight, 108 pounds; height, 5 feet 4 inches. (2) What are my weak points? (3) In No. 32 of this weekly Wallie Egbert, when running, throws his heels up behind. Is that the proper way to run when sprinting, or should you bring your knees well up in front? Please explain this. (4) Which is the best exercise, rowing or swimming? I remain a constant reader,

K. O. L.,
Ottawa, Canada.

(1 and 2) Few pounds under weight and calf undeveloped; otherwise satisfactory. (3) The handling of feet and legs differs greatly in different styles of running. In sprinting the knees should be raised more than in distance work. In sprinting it is also of importance to bend the body somewhat forward over the knees. Wallie Egbert, while running short distances at the time you mention, was nevertheless acquiring gait and endurance for distance running, and was working up to it by degrees, as most untrained boys have to do. So you are quite right in your conception of sprinting, and Manley was quite right in his method of training Wallie for the distance work. (4) Rowing is not as severe on the heart as swimming; but either can be overdone to the point of danger. Moderation should be used in both. The boy who is to be either a good oarsman or a long-distance swimmer should be content to work himself up very slowly.

New York, Sept. 4, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read all of your issues of the athletic hints in Frank Manley's Weekly, and therefore wish to ask you the following question: I am 15 years of age; weight 106 pounds; height, 5 feet 1 inch; chest, normal 29 inches, expanded 31 inches; neck, 12½ inches. I also run around the Lake in Central Park near 110th Street, Fifth Avenue to Seventh Avenue, and down to 106th Street. (1) How are my proportions? (2) Am I built well? (3) Is that good, running around the lake? (4) How am I built for football, and what position should I play for my build? Hoping you will answer all my questions, I remain,

Yours truly,

J. A. F.

(1) From the few measurements you give I should judge that you are well proportioned. (2) Try to get an inch or an inch and a half more chest expansion—this by systematic deep breathing and by use of the chest drill described in No. 27 of The Young Athlete's Weekly. (3) Once around is only fair. Keep at it until you can go twice around just as easily. (5) When you are a better runner you should be useful as an "end."

New York City, Sept. 4, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have been reading Frank Manley's Weekly ever since it appeared in print, and think it a grand and interesting weekly. I would like to ask you a few questions. I am just 16 years old, 5 feet 4½ inches tall and weigh 105½ pounds; neck, 13½ inches; shoulders, 17 inches; chest, normal 31 inches, expanded 33½ inches; biceps, 10½ inches; wrist, 7½ inches; waist, 27 inches; hips, 30 inches; thighs, 19 inches; calf, 14 inches; ankle, 10 inches. (1) What are my weak points, and how can I benefit them?

Yours truly,

F. Kresse.

You are seven or eight pounds under weight. Waist line a trifle too large and chest expansion not sufficient. Take up chest drill in No. 27 and abdominal work in Nos. 28 and 32 of The Young Athlete's Weekly.

Atlantic Highlands, N. J., Aug. 19, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I am writing for my seven-year-old brother, in whom I am very much interested. Enclosed you will find his measurements. All of these measurements were taken contracted, and were taken in a bathing suit: Age, 7 years; height, 4 feet 2 inches; weight, 55 pounds; right upper arm, 8 inches; left upper arm, 8 inches; right forearm, 8½ inches; left forearm, 8¼ inches; neck, 8¼ inches; waist, 23 inches; right calf, 10 inches; left calf, 9¾ inches; right thigh, 13 inches; left thigh, 12 inches; right ankle, 7 inches; left ankle, 7 inches; head, 20 inches; waist, 23 inches; wrist, 5¼ inches; across shoulders, 12 inches. A few of his records are as follows: Standing broad jump, 3 feet 11 inches; running broad jump, 6 feet 5 inches; 60-yard dash, 13 seconds. Hoping to see this in the "Letters from Readers," I am Frank Manley's everlasting friend and admirer,

M. D.

You can be mighty proud of your small brother. His records are surprisingly good. I take huge delight in hearing of these seven-year-old athletes! His records are as good as his measurements. My advice is to keep on training your brother in light, active work, avoiding any tendency to weight work for many years to come. He is, however, in good shape for a moderate amount of "chinning" on the

horizontal bar. But, above all, keep him running and jumping, and, in summer, with a moderate amount of swimming.

Atlantic Highlands, N. Y., Aug. 19, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I would like to find out if I have any strength. Here are a few of my measurements: Age, 13 years; 14 on October 1; chest, contracted 28 inches, expanded 30½ inches; height, 5 feet; weight, 90 pounds; right upper arm, contracted, 9 inches; left upper arm, contracted, 9 inches; right forearm, contracted, 9 inches; left forearm, contracted, 9¼ inches; neck, 11 inches; waist, 24½ inches; right calf, 12 inches; left calf, 12½ inches; right ankle, 9½ inches; left ankle, 9½ inches; right thigh, 17 inches; left thigh, 17 inches; head, 21¼ inches; wrist, 6 inches. Records: Running broad jump, 10 feet; standing broad jump, 6 feet 1 inch; 60-yard dash, 10 seconds. Hoping to see this in your "Letters from Readers," I remain,

Your friend and admirer,

Louis Milk Bottle.

You appear to be fairly well built. Waist is just a trifle large, and, though you do not state measurement of the normal chest, you appear to need more expansion.

New York City, Sept. 8, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Will you please answer the following questions: (1) How are my measurements? Age, 11 years; height, 4 feet 2 inches; weight, 80 pounds; waist, 24 inches; thigh, 16 inches; neck, 11 inches; wrist, 5¾ inches; calves, 9½ inches; chest, 28½ inches, chest expanded, 31½ inches. (2) What are my strong points? (3) What are my weak points? (4) How can I improve the weak points? Hoping to see this in print, I remain,

An Admirer of Frank,

Benjamin Spiegel.

(1 and 2) Waist a little too large, but chest bully! (3) Answered. (4) Take up abdominal drills described in Nos. 28 and 32 of The Young Athlete's Weekly.

Chicago, Sept. 7, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read quite a few numbers of Frank Manley's Weekly, and I think they are the best I ever read. Here are my measurements, and I would be pleased if you would publish letter, telling me what exercises to take and how to gain weight. Age, 17 years 3 months; weight, 110 pounds, stripped; height, 5 feet 2 inches; chest, normal 29¼ inches; expanded 31 inches; waist, normal 29 inches, expanded 31 inches; wrists, 6 inches; forearm, right, 9¼ inches; forearm, left, 9 inches; biceps (drawn up), right 10 inches, left 9.5-8 inches; neck, 13 inches; thighs, 17 inches; calves, 12½ inches; ankles, 8 inches.

Yours very respectfully,

Herbert J.

You do not want to gain weight, as you are already about ten pounds over the average at your age and height, and you have more than four inches too much waist line. Get that waist line down by the abdominal drills in Nos. 28 and 32 of The Young Athlete's Weekly. Get an inch or more of additional chest development.

Crows Run, Pa.

Dear Physical Director:

I am 15 years old, 5 feet 7¼ inches tall and weigh 126 pounds. Can run two miles and not be winded. (1) Am I as tall as I should be? (2) How about my weight? (3) How about the distance I run?

John Wike.

(1) Quite tall enough for your age. (2) Definitely heavy, but running should take off superfluous weight. (3) Good for a beginning; keep it up, increasing the distance gradually, until you can make five miles.

Charleston, S. C., Sept. 2, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I am a constant reader of Frank Manley's Weekly. I take the liberty of asking you a few questions. I have formed a club and call it A's Junior Club. We take Frank Manley's

and drill. We take a three-quarter-mile run every day. (1) Please tell us what time is best to take the run. We take rowing exercise. (2) Please tell us what time is best to row. What do you think of my measurements? Age, 14 years; height, 5 feet; weight, 81 pounds; neck, 12 inches; chest, normal 28½ inches; expanded 31½ inches; waist, 24 inches; wrist 6 inches; biceps, 8½ inches; forearm, 8¼ inches; calves, 11 1-8 inches. (4) Which are my weak points? (5) How can I increase my weight? I can chin the bar four times. How may I increase it? With praise to Frank Manley and Physical Director, I am

Yours truly,
Ed. M. F., Capt.

(1) Before breakfast. (2) Before breakfast or during the forenoon. (3 and 4) You need an inch and a half more chest expansion and a little increase at the biceps. (5) By following a careful diet and chewing all your food to a pulp before swallowing; drink no beverages at meal times.

Washington, D. C., Sept. 1, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Having read Frank Manley's Weekly up to date (or The Young Athlete's Weekly, as it used to be called), I wish you would answer my one question. Is cocoa a beverage, and will it hurt a boy of 14 years to drink it with two of his meals?

Yours truly,
C. H. Huette.

P. S.—Please answer in due time, as I wish to know if I can continue to drink it.

Cocoa is a food to a great extent. I would not use it with meals. Chew all your food to a pulp before swallowing and you will need no liquids with your meal.

Union City, Conn., Sept. 1, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read a few copies of Frank Manley's Weekly, which were very good. I am 15 years of age, 5 feet 1½ inches tall. Every morning before breakfast I take a short walk and drink a glass of water on rising. After breakfast I jump for about 15 minutes. I take a bath every other morning. After dinner I sit in my room and read for about an hour. Then I go for a walk and run a little bit. Tell me your opinion on these lines. (1) What kind of exercise should I take? (2) What weight dumbbells should I use? (3) Would you advise me to go to work if my parents can keep me at school? (4) Between what hours would be best to exercise? (5) What time should I turn in at night and what time should I arise? (6) Should I wear tight or loose fitting clothes? (7) Should I skate, play baseball and football very much? I am fair in all.

Yours truly,
Frank Neary,
17 Anderson Street.

(1) Take all-round exercise. (2) Two pounds! (3) Keep at school as long as you can. (4) On first rising in the morning, and a second bout before the evening meal. (5) Retire by nine and rise between five and six in the morning. (6) Rather loose-fitting. (7) Of course! Why such a question? Do not jump or take any other brisk exercise for at least an hour and a half after a meal; if you do you will throw your system out of gear.

Washington, D. C., Sept. 2, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I would like to ask some questions concerning my body. Age, 18 years; height, 5 feet 7 inches; weight in street clothes, 133 pounds; chest, expanded 35 inches, contracted 32 inches, normal 32 inches; biceps, normal 10 inches, contracted, 11½ inches; forearms 9 inches; neck, 14 inches; waist, 23 inches; hips, 29 inches; thighs, 19½ inches; calves, 12 inches; ankles, 8½ inches. (1) What are my weak and strong points? How may they be improved? (2) How can I develop back and broaden shoulders? (3) Do you think at 21 I will be a six-footer and broad in proportion?

Yours truly,
Jasper Johnson

(1) You are an average well-proportioned young man, except that you should have an inch and a half more chest expansion. Take up the deep-

breathing drill explained in No. 27 of The Young Athlete's Weekly. (2) By exercising your shoulders on the parallel bar and also (important) with the bag drills described in the first few numbers of Frank Manley's Weekly. (3) Very likely, if you keep faithfully at physical training in the meantime; but without training you have about reached your full height.

Philadelphia, Pa., Sept. 4, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read Frank Manley's Weekly and am interested in Frank Manley. Please answer my questions. (1) I am 11 years 2 months old; height, 4 feet 3 inches; weight, 70 pounds. (2) I am 13 inches across my shoulders. (3) I can expand three inches. (4) My wrists are 5 inches. (5) What events should I compete in? (6) Please tell me the cause of blackness around the eyes.

Yours truly,
Warner Goodman,
2420 Montrose Street.

At your age you should go in for running and general gymnastics, and not try to pick out a specialty until you develop one naturally during your athletic work. The blackness around the eyes would appear to be due to your being out of condition. Go in for general training and be out of doors all you can.

New York City, Sept. 2, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Being a faithful reader of the king of weeklies, I beg leave to ask a few questions. Height, 5 feet 1 inch; age, 15 years; chest, normal 26¼ inches, expanded 27½ inches; full length of left arm, 23¼ inches; full length of right arm, 23¼ inches; right wrist, 6 inches; left wrist, 6 inches; right bicep, normal 7¾ inches; tense 8 inches; left bicep, normal 7 3-8 inches, tense 8 3-8 inches; neck, normal 11 1-8 inches, tense 12 inches. How are my measurements? What are my weak points? Is chewing gum good or bad for the health? When is the best time for running, and how long should I run? Thanking you in advance, I remain,

Sincerely yours,
H. R. Schulz,
153 E. 97th Street.

P. S.—Long live Physical Director and Frank Manley!

As you have omitted your weight, I can tell very little about your measurements; but you certainly have very poor chest expansion. Gum chewing is not necessary. Chew your food to a fine pulp before swallowing. I have stated repeatedly that the best time for running is on first rising in the morning, and that one should run as far as he can with comfort, gradually increasing the distance, until at last he is good at any time for a five-mile jogging run.

572½ Grove St., Jersey City, N. J.,
Friday, Sept. 1, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Having read a great number of copies of Frank Manley's Weekly, I thought I would send you my measurements. I am 14 years 6 months old; height, 5 feet 4½ inches; weight, 114 pounds; shoulders, 17 inches; chest, normal 31 inches, expanded 34 inches; wrists, each 6½ inches; ankles, 9½ inches; right forearm, 10 inches; left forearm, 9½ inches; calf, 12 inches; neck, 13½ inches; waist, 30 inches; left and right thigh, 18 inches; knees, 13¼ inches. (1) How can I get rid of a pain which comes in the left side of the back and in the lower part of the spine? As it is a pain that stays about one or two minutes, and is a disagreeable one, I would like to know the way to get rid of it. Hoping soon to see this in print, I am

Your friend,
Abe Shulman.

P. S.—Kindly tell me my strong and weak points.

Your measurements are good, except that your calf is too small and your waist line three and a half inches too large. You do not tell me enough about the pain, so that I am unable to understand what causes it.

Columbus, Ohio, Sept. 2, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I thought I would write you and ask a few questions, as I am a reader of Frank Manley's Weekly and admire Frank and all his friends. My age is 13 years and 3 weeks; weight, 72½

pounds; height, 5 feet. (1) How are my measurements? Wrist, 5 1-3 inches; ankles, 9 inches; neck, 10 inches; chest, normal 23 inches, expanded 24 1-3 inches; around knees, 12 inches; around elbows, 8 inches; muscles in arms, normal 7½ inches, drawn up 9 inches. (2) I get a pain under my knee when walking fast or long distances, sometimes. (3) I cannot cover short distances as fast as other boys. How shall I improve? (4) Is it very necessary to take a bath every morning after running? (5) What time should I go to bed and arise? (6) Sometimes when running I get a pain in my heart, and sometimes in the side of my leg near the hip. What causes it? How shall I cure it? (7) Have you any books on jiu-jitsu, and how much are they? I will close now, giving three cheers for Frank Manley and the Woodstock Junior Athletic Club. I remain,

V. S.

Your measurements are rather slight, but they can be built up by daily exercise. (2) Due to weakness of muscles; steady training will gradually overcome this tendency. (3) By constant practice. (4) Decidedly; otherwise your skin is not clean, even if it looks so. A clean skin is necessary, if your organs are to work properly. (5) About 8.30, rising a little before 6. (6) Probably muscular weakness. If at all in doubt about your heart, it would pay to have it examined by a competent family physician. (7) No.

Everett, Mass., Sept. 7, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I thought I would write about myself. I never went in training for athletics before, but since I began reading your books I have begun. I have played football and baseball and a few other sports. Will you please tell me in your next issue how a young man can develop himself? My measurements are: Age, 18; height, 5 feet 6¾ inches; weight, 136 pounds; neck, 14½ inches; across shoulders, 19 inches; chest, normal 32 inches, expanded 35 inches; waist, 29 inches. Thanking you, I remain,

Dick M. Wells.

P. S.—How are my measurements?

You are quite well built, except that your waist line is an inch too large. On training and exercise read Talks 44 and 45.

Stapleton, N. Y., Sept. 8, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have been taking your advice in Frank Manley's Weekly, and write to ask you some questions and send you my measurements. (1) Age, 14 years 4 months; height, 5 feet 7 inches in stocking feet; weight, 135 pounds; chest, normal 33 inches, contracted 31 inches, expanded 37 inches; waist, 29 inches; calves, 13 inches; ankle, 10 inches; reach, 70 inches; wrist, 7 inches; neck, 12½ inches. Can lift 200 pounds. Hundred-yard dash in 12 seconds. (2) Please tell me where my weak spots are and how to improve them. Some of my exercises are swimming, rowing, boxing, fencing, running, tennis, baseball, bicycle riding, skating and rugby playing. Hoping you will answer this, I remain,

Most respectfully yours,
L. P. C. S.

(1) Calves and neck too small; waist an inch too large. Sprint very good at your age. (2) For advice as to development of weak points read Talks 44 and 45.

Beaumont, Tex., Sept. 7, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read all the issues of Frank Manley's Weekly, and they are fine. I want to ask a few questions. (1) I am 14 years 7 months old; height, 5 feet 1 inch; weight, 94 pounds; chest, normal 28 inches, expanded 30½ inches; waist, 27 inches; ankle 8½ inches; calves, 12½ inches; thighs, 18 inches; neck, 12 inches; wrists, 6 inches; right bicep, normal 8½ inches, flexed 9½ inches; left bicep, normal 10 inches; reach, 26 inches; shoulders, 16 inches. (2) Why is it that my left bicep is larger when flexed than my right? Please tell me my weak points.

A Lover of Athletics.

(1) You are satisfactorily built, except that waist line is three and a half inches too large. Train down with the abdominal work described in Nos. 28 and 32 of The Young Athlete's Weekly. (2) Because, for some reason, your right arm gets less exercise than the left.

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